

AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S ETHICS

by

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Thesis presented to the University of Edinburgh  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
1972.



## PREFACE.

Al-Ghazālī, who lived in the eleventh century of the Christian era, was one of the greatest Muslim thinkers. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge and wrote a great number of books on many subjects: ethics, Islamic jurisprudence, theology, metaphysics and logic. Ethics occupied a central position in his thought. He set forth his ethical views in many books according to the need and interest of various categories of his readers. Since his thought developed through several stages, the books he wrote including those on ethics are usually divided in accordance with these stages. They have been arranged chronologically by such scholars as Maurice Boyges, W. Montgomery Watt, George F. Hourani, 'Abd-ar-Rahmān Badawī and Farīd Jabre. The creative part of al-Ghazālī's life may broadly be divided into two phases, the early period and the later period which began from his conversion to Islamic mysticism (ṣūfīsm). His ethical works belonged to both periods and are coloured with their characteristics.

There is disagreement on the authenticity of some of the works attributed to al-Ghazālī. Some ethical works ascribed to him as of the later period of his life are of doubtful authenticity in their entirety, while some ethical works of both periods are shown to be spurious only in part. Some



ideas in an ethical work of a moderate size of the earlier period or, more accurately, of the transitional period, are regarded as superseded by those set forth in his later works.

In view of these established facts regarding al-Ghazālī's works on morals, any study of them which does not take these facts into consideration may not be regarded as revealing the truth about him in its entirety. Such a study misleads readers and scholars with regard to al-Ghazālī and engenders various theories of his life. Unfortunately, all of the very few studies hitherto made on his ethics are partly based upon the unauthentic books, unauthentic parts of books and the books containing the superseded ideas, as they are also based upon the authentic books. Besides thus mixing the non-Ghazālīan or superseded Ghazālīan ideas with the genuine Ghazālīan teachings, they often failed to investigate the basic moral principles which are explicit or implicit in his teaching and also to give as complete a description of it as possible in the length of a book. They are unsatisfactory on various other accounts also. Therefore, there is a need for a study of his ethics which is based only upon those ethical works which all the scholars have accepted as authentic and which have not been superseded by others. Such a study should give readers a true knowledge and understanding of this great man and of his thought concerning moral problems.

The present work is an effort to meet this need. It is a new approach to the study of al-Ghazālī's ethical theory for it seeks to present this theory in a reasonably complete

form by drawing only upon materials from his genuine works or genuine parts of works which have not been superseded. Among the works of the earlier period, therefore, Mizān al-ʿAmal (Criterion of Action) is discarded altogether; (reference to it is made in a few places only for the sake of comparison). Out of the large number of the ethical works of the later period whose authenticity has been generally accepted, almost a score is selected to constitute the basis of the present study, since to make use of all his works would be impossible in a limited period of time. Efforts are also made in this work to bring to light the principles of al-Ghazālī's ethics. Sometimes it has been found necessary to enquire into the sources of his inspiration and ideas. This study, however, does not seek, except very rarely, to determine the influence of al-Ghazālī's ethics upon the subsequent development of ethical thought in Islam or in Christianity - a task which may form the subject-matter of a separate study.

It is a great pleasure to be able to acknowledge my debt to all those who have helped me to bring this work to its conclusion. I am grateful to Professor W. Montgomery Watt for his kindly supervising it and making valuable comments on it, and to Mrs. Phyllis Graham for the trouble she has taken in going through the manuscript. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Government of the United Kingdom for financing me for my studies, and to the members of the British Councils in London and in Edinburgh for rendering me all possible help in various matters during my three years stay in Britain.

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## ABBREVIATIONS.

The works of al-Ghazālī referred to in this study are abbreviated as follows:

<u>A.D.</u>	<u>Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn fī Usūl ad-Dīn.</u>
<u>A.W.</u>	<u>Ayyuhā l-Walad.</u>
<u>B.H.</u>	<u>Bidāyat al-Hidāya.</u>
<u>I.D.</u>	<u>Ihyāʾ ʿUlūm ad-Dīn.</u>
<u>I.ʿA.</u>	<u>Iljām al-ʿAwāmʿan ʿIlm al-Kalām.</u>
<u>I.I.</u>	<u>Al-Imlāʾ ʿalā Ishkālāt al-Ihyāʾ in Mulhaq Ihyāʾ ʿUlūm ad-Dīn.</u>
<u>I.ʿI.</u>	<u>Al-Iqtidād fī l-Iʿtiqād.</u>
<u>J.Q.</u>	<u>Jawāhir al-Qurʾān.</u>
<u>K.S.</u>	<u>Kimiyā-i-Saʿādat.</u>
<u>M.F.</u>	<u>Maqāsid al-Falāsifa.</u>
<u>M.A.</u>	<u>Al-Maqṣad al-Asnāʾ<sup>fī</sup> Sharh Asmāʾ Allāh al-Husnā.</u>
<u>M.</u>	<u>Mishkāt al-Anwār.</u>
<u>M.ʿI.</u>	<u>Miʿyār al-ʿIlm fī fann al-Mantiq.</u>
<u>M.ʿA.</u>	<u>Mizān al-ʿAmal.</u>
<u>M.D.</u>	<u>Al-Munqidh min ad-Dalāl.</u>
<u>N.M.</u>	<u>Nasīhat al-Mulūk.</u>
<u>T.F.</u>	<u>Tahāfut al-Falāsifa.</u>

The abbreviations listed below are used for the journals and encyclopaedias referred to in this work:

<u>D.I.</u>	<u>Der Islam.</u>
<u>E.I.</u>	<u>Encyclopaedia of Islam.</u>
<u>E.R.E.</u>	<u>Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.</u>
<u>G.O.S.T.</u>	<u>Glasgow Oriental Society Transactions.</u>
<u>I.C.</u>	<u>Islamic Culture.</u>
<u>I.S.</u>	<u>Islamic Studies.</u>
<u>J.A.O.S.</u>	<u>Journal of the American Oriental Society.</u>
<u>J.R.A.S.</u>	<u>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.</u>
<u>J.S.S.</u>	<u>Journal of Semitic Studies.</u>
<u>M.W.</u>	<u>The Muslim World.</u>
<u>ORIENS.</u>	<u>Journal of the International Society for Oriental Research.</u>
<u>P.F.</u>	<u>The Philosophic Forum.</u>
<u>M.I.D.E.O.</u>	<u>Mélanges de l'Institut dominicain d'études orientales du Caire.</u>
<u>S.I.</u>	<u>Studia Islamica.</u>
<u>V.B.Q.</u>	<u>The Visra Bharat Quarterly.</u>
<u>Z.D.M.G.</u>	<u>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.</u>

## CHAPTER I

### THE NATURE OF AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S ETHICS

The ethical theory which al-Ghazālī set forth in those of his works on which the present study is based was the outcome of thought of his later years when he was living the life of a devout ṣūfī and an extremely religious man. He had, in that period, a state of mind and an attitude towards life and the world which he had not had previously. This state of mind determined, to a great extent, the nature of his teachings on different problems of morals and the sources from which he derived his views. Before stating, therefore, the nature of his ethical theory, it seems necessary to discuss, very briefly of course, the state of his mind at that time and the intellectual stages through which he passed to reach that state. It is only then that a precise appreciation of the nature of his ethical theory is possible.

#### Stages of al-Ghazālī's Intellectual Evolution

(1) The earliest spiritual training which al-Ghazālī received when he was under the guardianship of a pious ṣūfī friend of his father was through studying the Qur'ān and Traditions, stories of the saints and their spiritual states and committing to memory some poems concerning passionate love and lovers.<sup>1</sup> This was followed by a study mainly of jurisprudence (fiqh) in his native town of Tus under Shaikh Aḥmad ar-Rādhkānī at-Tūsī and then at Jurjan under Imām Abū-Naṣr al-Isma'īlī of whose lectures he took

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1. M. Ridā, Abū-Hamīd al-Ghazālī, Cairo, 1924, p.52.



notes which he memorized in the three years after his return to Tus.<sup>1</sup> In these three years he seems to have studied Islamic mysticism (sūfism) under Yūsuf an-Nassāj and to have become acquainted with the spiritual 'states' (ahwāl) of the righteous and the 'stations' (maqāmāt) of the gnostics (ʿārifūn) and also to have undertaken some of the exercises as a result of which his character was purified.

Al-Ghazālī then went to Nishapur in 470/1077<sup>2</sup> and studied theology, dialectics, natural science, philosophy and logic under abū l-Maʿālī al-Juwaynī, known as the Imām al-Haramayn, who was the most distinguished Ashʿarite theologian of the day and a renowned professor at the Nizāmiyya College at Nishapur.<sup>3</sup> It seems probable that under the Imām he studied mysticism too, for the Imām had been a pupil of the famous sūfī abū-Nuʿaym al-Ispahānī (d. 430/1038) and when he himself was dealing with the doctrines of the sūfīs and their 'states' he used to bring tears to the eyes of all present.<sup>4</sup> It was the Imām who introduced al-Ghazālī to logic and philosophy. The main subject of his study under Juwaynī, however, was doubtless dogmatic theology (kalām), a subject on which he does not seem to have been instructed by any other of his teachers. In these days as a student at Nishapur he also learnt more about the theory and practice of mysticism

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1. Tāj-ad-Dīn as Subkī, Tabaqāt ash-Shāfiʿiyya l-Kubrā, 1st ed., Egypt, A.H., 1324, 111, 36, ~~37~~, IV, 103; (Hereinafter referred to as Tabaqāt).

2. Margaret Smith, Al-Ghazali, the Mystic, London, 1944, p.15; W. Montgomery Watt, Muslim Intellectual, Edinburgh, 1963, p.21.

3. Subkī, Tabaqāt, IV, 103, 107.

4. Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt al-Aʿyān, tr. Baron McGuckin de Slane, Paris, 1842, I, 413.

from a professor, probably of jurisprudence, al-Fārmadhī (d. 477/1084), who was a leader of the sufis there. Under his guidance al-Ghazālī practised rigorous ascetic and sufiistic exercises but he did not attain to that stage of mysticism where the mystics begin to receive pure inspiration from on high. So, he neglected mysticism and turned to theology and philosophy.<sup>1</sup> (In his spiritual crisis of 1095 A.D. however, he came back to mysticism, and remained a mystic as well as an Ash'arite theologian until his death.)

(2) During these days as a student, as in the years that immediately followed, al-Ghazālī was greatly concerned with the quest for absolutely certain knowledge, by which he meant such a knowledge as was infallible and left no room for doubt or involved no possibility of error. In his earliest youth he had abandoned naive and second-hand belief (taqlīd) finding it the greatest hindrance in his search for truth.<sup>2</sup> While a disciple of the Imām al-Haramayn he developed the habit of examining theological questions and controversies with the result that a sceptical tendency grew in him which, however, was to be restrained by the influence of his teacher, who was a man of great depth of character. But this sceptical tendency further developed during the time he was in the camp-court (ma'askar) of the vizier Nizām al-Mulk<sup>3</sup> where he came on the Imām's death in 478/1084 and where he spent

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1. Ibid., 11, 122; Subkī, Tabaqāt, IV, 109.

2. M.D., tr. Watt in The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī, London, 1953, pp.20-22.

✓ 3. Duncan B. Macdonald, "The Life of al-Ghazālī with special reference to his religious experiences and opinions", J.A.O.S., XX, first half (1899), 78, 82.

the following six years in great favour with the vizier. About the time of his move to Baghdad<sup>1</sup> to take over the Chair of jurisprudence at the Nizāmiyya College in 484/1091, an absolute scepticism took hold of him. He investigated the various kinds of knowledge that he now had and found all, except sense perception and necessary truths, lacking the characteristic of infallibility which was his criterion of sure knowledge. On serious reflection, however, he found even these two kinds of knowledge to be unreliable: first he doubted sense perception on the ground that when judged by the intellect it very often proves false. Then he doubted those intellectual truths which are first principles or derived from first principles because perhaps behind intellectual apprehension there is another judge who, if he manifests himself, will show falsity of intellect in its judging, just as when intellect manifested itself it showed the falsity of sense in its perception. The fact that such a supra-intellectual apprehension has not manifested itself is no proof that it is impossible. There might come, he apprehended, a state when the suppositions of intellect will prove to be empty imaginings; that state might be death when things come to appear differently to man from what he beheld before, or the ecstatic state of the *sūfis* in which things appear in a different way from that understood by the intellect. Thus al-Ghazālī had no principle which might enable him to regulate his thought; he even had no faith in religion. Such a state of complete scepticism lasted two months. At length, God, out of mercy, enlightened his mind so that he found himself able to accept the

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1. Watt, Intellectual, p.51; "Al-Ghazālī", EI, new ed., 11, 1039a.

necessary principles of the intellect - he saw intuitively that these principles were true. He now regained his power of ordered thought and resolutely applied himself to a quest for sure truth. He found those engaged in the search for truth divided into four groups - theologians, philosophers, ta'limites and sūfis - and, believing that the truth must have been attained by one of them, began to study their views with extreme care and earnestness.<sup>1</sup>

(3) Al-Ghazālī began with the science of theology (ʿilm al-Kalām), a discipline which was founded by al-Ashʿarī and in which he had been thoroughly trained. He found that the aim of the theologians consisted in defending dogmas against heretical aberrations and innovations and that they fulfilled this aim of theirs very effectively. They also made attempts to meet the students of philosophy on their own grounds, but these failed because they could not meet the demands of Aristotelian logic which was the basis of the teachings of the philosophers. Thus al-Ghazālī was dissatisfied not with the doctrines but with the method of dogmatic theology; the doctrines of the theologians he found to be sound, but their method could not give him the certainty he was trying to achieve.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Ghazālī then turned to study philosophy in order to see whether or not absolute truth lies in this discipline. He was at Baghdad at that time teaching religious sciences (al-ʿalūm ash-sharʿiyya), chiefly jurisprudence, to over three hundred students, writing treatises and giving legal decisions (fatawā). By reading the works on various branches of philosophy in his

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1. M.D., pp.20-27.

2. Ibid., pp.27-29.

spare time and without any teacher, he mastered the philosophy of his day in less than two years. He spent nearly another year reflecting assiduously on what he had assimilated until he comprehended how far it was true and how far false.<sup>1</sup> He divided the philosophers into three groups, namely, the materialists (dahriyyūn), the naturalists (tabi'īyyūn) and the atheists (ilāhiyyūn). The first group consisting of the earliest philosophers denied the Creator and Disposer of the world and believed that it had been in existence from all eternity of itself. Al-Ghazālī looked upon them as irreligious (zanādiqa). The naturalists, struck by the wonders of creation and aware of continuing purpose and wisdom in the scheme of things, while engaged in their manifold researches into the sciences of phenomena, admitted the existence of a wise Creator but denied the spirituality and immateriality of the human soul. They explained the soul in naturalistic terms as an epiphenomenon of the body and believed that the death of the latter led to the complete non-existence of the former. Belief in Heaven, Hell and Judgment they considered as old wives' tales or pious fictions. Because they denied the future life al-Ghazālī considered them, too, as irreligious. The theists were the more modern philosophers and included Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Although they attacked the materialists and the naturalists and exposed their defects very effectively, they retained, in al-Ghazālī's opinion, a residue of their unbelief and heresy. He, therefore, looked upon them as well as these Muslim philosophers who followed them as unbelievers. Among their followers he

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1. Ibid., pp.29-30.



found al-Fārābī and Avicenna to be the best transmitters of Aristotle's philosophy into the Islamic world. Some parts of all that they had transmitted he reckoned as sheer unbelief, some as gross heresy and others<sup>as</sup> absolutely undeniable.<sup>1</sup>

Being dissatisfied with philosophy, al-Ghazālī came to examine the teachings of the *Ta'limites*, the party of the "authoritative instruction" (*ta'lim*) also known as *Isma'ilites* and *Bāṭinites*. His skill in logic exposed many grave inconsistencies and weaknesses of the *Ta'limites*. He saw that though they profess to abandon reasoning and to depend for apprehending the truth about anything on the instruction of a living infallible Imām, they cannot avoid surreptitiously making use of it, and he found that it is practically impossible to consult the Imām or his representative in every case. Besides such grave inconsistencies, he also noticed the shallowness of their thought, for he found nothing beyond their accustomed formulae.<sup>2</sup> At this time of his quest for certain truth, al-Ghazālī did not attack their conception of esoteric meaning (*bāṭin*) which is the complement of their doctrine of authoritative instruction.

Lastly, al-Ghazālī turned to the way of mysticism, being convinced that the mystics and they alone, among the seekers for truth, have really attained their purpose. By studying the works of some eminent mystics, he gained a complete understanding of the intellectual aspect of this discipline and realised that what was distinctive of it could not be apprehended by study but only by immediate experience (*dhawq*), by ecstasy or by moral

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1. *Ibid.*, pp.30-32.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.44-45.

change. He realized very clearly that the mystics are men, not of words (ashāb al-aqwāl), but of real experience (arbāb al-ahwāl) and that what was necessary for him was to live their lives and practise their practices, and to forsake the world.<sup>1</sup>

Just at that time al-Ghazālī, who had already regained a steadfast belief in God, prophethood and the Last Day, was overtaken by an extreme fear. This fear was neither of the assassination by the Bāṭinites as Farid Jabre suggested,<sup>2</sup> nor of ill-treatment by the new Seljūq ruler with whom he had bad relations, as Macdonald is inclined to say,<sup>3</sup> but of the Day of Judgement. He thought that he would certainly be punished in Hell-fire if he did not live a God-fearing life and withdraw from vain desires. What is necessary for living such a life is, he perceived, to sever the attachment of his soul to worldly things by leaving this world and to advance to God; and this could only be achieved by abandoning wealth and position and fleeing from all time-consuming entanglements. He looked at his present life, his writing and his teaching and found that these are of no value in the face of the great facts of Heaven and Hell, that all these were for the sake of vain glory and not for pleasing God. Such a life would, he felt, surely cause him to be in danger of Hell-fire in the hereafter. If he was to hope for the eternal happiness of the life to come, he must serve God completely as a poor ṣūfī. He, therefore, abandoned

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1. Ibid., pp.54-55.

2. "La vie et L'oeuvre de Ghazali reconsidérées à la lumière des Tabaqat de Sobki", MIDEO, 1954, pp.73-102.

3. "Life", pp.88, 98; "Al-Ghazālī", EI<sup>1</sup>, 11, 146b.

his professorship and his whole career as a jurist and theologian, divested himself of all his wealth except what was necessary for his own support and that of his children, and, finding himself unable to live an upright life in the worldly Baghdadian society, left for Damascus in Dhū l-Qa'da 488/1095.<sup>1</sup>

(4) Converted to mysticism, al-Ghazālī now completely devoted himself to ascetic practices in perfect solitude and retirement. He busied himself in purifying his soul from vices, beautifying it with virtues and occupying it with the recollection of God, in accordance with the knowledge he had previously acquired by studying the writings of some eminent mystics. In the ten years of a vigorous moral training which he spent successively in Damascus, Jerusalem, Hebron, the Hijaz, Iraq and Tus,<sup>2</sup> he advanced far along the mystic path. Many unfathomable mysteries were revealed to him during these years and he became fully convinced that the mystic 'way' (tariqa) was the best way of life for man to follow; that it was above all the mystics who walked on the path of God, their life is the best life, their method the soundest method, their character the purest character. The light in which they walk on the path is essentially the light of prophecy; there is no other light to lighten any man in this world.<sup>3</sup> This attitude of al-Ghazālī towards sūfism remained unchanged to the end of his life. He lived a mystical life until his death.

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1. M.D., pp.56-59; cf. Watt, Intellectual, pp.43, 140-143; "The Study of al-Ghazālī", ORIENS, 13-14 (1960-61), pp.129-130.

2. Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Edinburgh, 1963, p.116; "Al-Ghazālī", p.1039a.

3. M.D., pp.60-61.



The Nature of the Moral Theory given in the Works of the  
Mystical Period.

During this mystical period of al-Ghazālī's life which lasted from his departure from Baghdad until his death, he composed a number of ethical works most of which are accepted by scholars as authentic; only parts of a few of them are rejected or doubted as spurious.<sup>1</sup> The nature of the moral theory set forth in the works of this period and other related problems can be better apprehended if the central problem discussed in them is first determined. From the preceding section it is plain that throughout his student life al-Ghazālī received some instruction in mystical theory and practice in addition to his study of other subjects; then he neglected mysticism for some time, but in course of his examination of the four groups of seekers after truth, he returned to it and found in it the sure truth he had been searching for so diligently; his thorough study of some eminent ṣūfī's works resulted in producing in his mind an extreme fear of punishment in the hereafter which led him to a life of solitude fully occupied with religious and mystical practices, with purification of the soul and refinement of character. Thus, on the practical side his problem during the mystical period was to prepare himself to escape from punishment in Hell and to achieve happiness in Paradise, or in other words, to avoid abandonment by God and to gain nearness

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1. For the names of the works written during the mystical period, their chronological order and those parts of some of them whose authenticity has been doubted see; Watt; "The Authenticity of the Works attributed to Al-Ghazālī", J.R.A.S., 1952, pp.24-45; George F. Hourani; "The Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings", J.A.O.S., LXXX (1959), 225-33; 'Abd-ar-Rahmān Badawī, "Mu'allafāt al-Ghazālī", Cairo, 1961.

(gurb) to Him. On the intellectual side his problem was to convey his thoughts and experiences to others so that by acting on them they too might reach the same goal; for he believed that most men lived in the lowest depths of moral degradation which, he thought, would certainly cause them misery in the life to come. In the introduction to the Ihyā'<sup>1</sup> and in the Muhqidh<sup>2</sup> he briefly described this moral degradation with its causes and also expounded his main problem. Speaking of this problem at the time of his going to Nishapur he wrote:

"Now I am calling men to the knowledge whereby worldly success is given up and its low position in the scale of real worth is recognised. This is now my intention, my aim, my desire; God knows that this is so. It is my earnest longing that I may make myself and others better".<sup>3</sup>

Thus the main concern of his life and thought during the sūfī period was well-being in the hereafter.<sup>4</sup> This concern found its fullest expression throughout his whole ethics. It determined various aspects of his moral theory. It made his ethics religious and mystical, as opposed to secular ethics such as that of Aristotle which is exclusively concerned with the human Good in this life.

In keeping with his central problem al-Ghazālī calls his

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1. I, 2-3.      2. pp.71, 74, 76.      3. p.76.

4. This is also recognised by A.J. Wensinck in his Semietische Studien Uit de Nalatenschap, Leiden, 1941, p.167, and by Watt in his "Study", p.128, where he argues against Jabre who holds that the central problem of al-Ghazālī's life and thought was certitude or how to attain certain truth about the main truths of Islam. This, as explained in the preceding section, was certainly his central problem at the time of his first intellectual crisis; in regarding this as the main problem of al-Ghazālī's whole life Jabre seems to have over-emphasised al-Ghazālī's earlier thought and neglected his ideas during the mystical period.

ethics the science of the path of the hereafter ('ilm tariq al-ākhirā), the path trodden by the prophets and righteous ancestors (as-salḥ as-sāliḥ). He also calls it the science of devotional practice ('ilm al-mu'āmalā). In the works composed during the mystical period he does not seem to have used the phrase 'ilm al-akhlāq for ethics. Thus, al-Ghazālī gives two names to his ethics, and in this he seems to have followed the sūfīs.<sup>1</sup> Ethics, in his opinion, is a study of certain religious beliefs (i'tiqādat) and of rightness and wrongness of action for the purpose of practice and not for the sake of mere knowledge. Study of action includes the study of actions directed towards God, of actions directed towards one's fellow-men in family and in society, of purification of the soul from vices and of beautifying it with virtues. Thus the scope of al-Ghazālī's ethics is very wide and this is a characteristic of sūfī ethics. This may be made clearer by considering the scope of the Muslim philosophers' ethics which he reproduced in his Maqāsid.<sup>2</sup> He says that they divided the science of wisdom (al-'ilm al-hikmī), into two parts. One deals with man's action and is called practical science ('ilm 'amali). By it he knows the types of action which are means to his well-being in this life as well as

1. Abū-Talib al-Makkī, Qūt al-Qulūb, Egypt, 1961, I, 8-9 (Hereinafter referred to as Qūt); Al-Hujwiri, Kashf al-Mahjūb, tr. R.A. Nicholson, London, 1911, pp.86, 115 (Hereinafter referred to as Kashf). In the M. 'A. (p.54) a work composed just before his conversion to sūfism al-Ghazālī used 'ilm al-akhlāq for ethics. Here he seems to have followed a philosopher, Avicenna, since the classification of the practical science given here agrees with Avicenna's division of the practical sciences in his ash-Shifā': Introduction, ed. Ibrāhīm Madkūr (U.A.R. Wazārat al-ma'ārif al-'Umūmiyya, 1952), pp.12-14 and in his Fi Aqsām al-'Ulūm al-'Aqliyya in Tis-Rasā'il fi-Hikma wa't-Tabī'iyyat, Cairo, 1908, pp.105, 107-8.

2. pp.134-36.

in the next. The other part is that science by which man knows the existences as they really are and is called theoretical science ('ilm nazari). Practical science is divided into three parts. One is the science which regulates a man's dealings with others in society in such a way that they may cause him well-being in this life and also in the next; it finds its perfection in political science. The second is the science of man's behaviour to the members of his family (ahl al-manzil); by it he knows how he should live with his wife, children, servants and so on. "The third is ethics ('ilm al-akhlāq) dealing with that which man should achieve so that he may be good and virtuous in his character-traits and qualities." Thus the Muslim philosophers, in al-Ghazālī's view, regarded ethics as a practical study dealing only with the qualities of the soul, i.e. virtues and vices; man's conduct in his family life, in social relationship and in the sphere of politics falls outside the scope of their moral theory. In the Munqidh also he speaks of the narrow scope of their ethics.<sup>1</sup> This view of al-Ghazālī on the subject-matter of their ethics is true so far as Avicenna is concerned, since it is he who divided sciences in this way. Abū-Nasr al-Fārābī's classification of sciences is different; he regarded ethics not as a separate subject but as included in politics.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Ghazālī separates politics from the scope of his ethics, and in this he is following his sūfī predecessors and also a

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1. M.D., p.38.

2. Ihsā' al-'Ulūm, ed. 'Uthmān Amīn (2nd ed. Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1949), pp.102-103; Al-Milla wa Nusūs Ukhrā, ed. Muhsin Mahdī (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1968), pp.69-70.

philosopher, Avicenna, who differed from the great Greek moralists and from al-Fārābī on this question. Al-Ghazālī gives reasons for his view. He says that ideal government in the Islamic community is based upon the rules of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh); since these rules are derived, through men's reasons ('uqūl), from the four sources (usūl) of the Sharī'a,<sup>1</sup> the Islamic state is practically founded upon the Sharī'a; in this way an ideal Islamic community has divinely-given character or structure and it is through the membership of such a community that a man attains salvation.<sup>2</sup> Now the rules of jurisprudence are derived from the four sources for the purpose of the good ordering of secular affairs; the jurists are the learned men of this world ('ulamā' ad-dunyā).<sup>3</sup> They supply the ruler with canons with which to govern the people in such a way that justice, peace and harmony prevail in the country; the rules of government have no concern with man's well-being in the life to come, the central problem of ethics. The judgements of the jurists as to the rightness or wrongness of actions directed towards God and towards man are based upon this-worldly considerations only, namely whether these actions have fulfilled

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1. I.D., I, 15.

2. cf. Watt, "Reflections on al-Ghazālī's Political Theory" G.U.O.S.R., XXI, 14, 17, 18, 22.

3. However, those jurists who do not devote themselves exclusively to the science of jurisprudence but are employed in the science of the soul and the observance thereof, are regarded as learned men of the hereafter ('ulamā' al-ākhirā). The leaders of the five well-known schools of Islamic jurisprudence are included among them. Each of these leaders was a worshipper of God, an ascetic, a learned man, versed in the science of the hereafter, a jurist well informed in man's affairs in this world and a devotee to God's face; see I.D., I., 22-26.



the formal requirements of the Shari'a and thereby rendered their doers immune from punishment by the ruler; considering these actions from the viewpoint of other-worldly well-being is outside the domain of jurisprudence and, consequently, of politics but belongs solely to ethics. Thus the canons of politics (qawānīn as-siyāsa) which are the same as the rules of jurisprudence are separate from the moral rules. They are, however, useful to morality in the sense that by the good ordering of worldly affairs and by establishing justice and peace in society they facilitate the cultivation of morality; it is only in a society where life and property are secure that ethico-religious duties can perfectly be performed, and such a society can only be created by the state - the reason why al-Ghazālī often repeats Nizām al-Mulk's dictum, 'religion and state are twins'.<sup>1</sup> In this way politics and jurisprudence have only an indirect connection with ethics. In themselves they are subjects separate from ethics and this is very clearly explained in a passage of the Ihyā'.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Ghazālī's separation of politics from ethics is linked up with the individualistic nature of his ethics. In the Greek period the Greek city state formed the background of the moral life, and the man who performed his duties as a citizen was regarded as a good man; morality was thus a fundamental part of politics. This outlook changed in the mediaeval period; the breaking up of the Greek city states in the fourth century B.C. and the development of spiritual religions such as Christianity, and

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1. I.D., I, 16-18; cf. Watt, "Reflections" pp.17, 18, 23.

2. I.D., I, 16.

Islam aided an advance towards an individualistic outlook. These religions emphasised the individual for it is the individual soul which is destined to personal immortality. They taught that man looked on the outward appearance but the Lord looks on the soul. So more attention was to be given to the inner aspect of morality; it was man's inner motive that indicated his true spiritual state and fitted him for the life of Paradise, which was the true aspiration of every man. Influenced by such religious teachings, the *sūfīs*, al-Ghazālī among them, presented individualistic systems of ethics.<sup>1</sup> This kind of ethics encourages personal interest in morality. Moral standards are not accepted in it as parts of the moral atmosphere of society. To be good is taught to be an individual matter and is sometimes actually thought of as being for the advantage merely of the individual himself. Individualism is the assertion by the individual of his own opinions and beliefs, his own independence and interest as over against group standards, authority and interests.

In accordance with the central problem of his ethics al-Ghazālī gives his view of the purpose of ethical study. There are three chief theories about the purpose of studying ethics: (a) Ethics is a purely theoretical study, seeking to understand the nature of morality but with no purpose of affecting the conduct of the man who studies it, (b) The chief purpose of ethics is to influence our actual conduct, (c) While ethics is primarily a theoretical subject which is concerned with discovering the truth about moral matters, there must be in the course of

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1. cf. Watt, Intellectual, pp.132-33.

ethical investigation a constant criticism of existing standards of morality, so that ethics becomes a practical subject almost in spite of itself. Al-Ghazālī agrees with the second theory. He says that the study of 'the science of devotional practice' is meant for practice; the aim of practice should be to improve the state of the soul so that well-being may be achieved in the hereafter.<sup>1</sup> This study has value only because without it good and bad cannot be perfectly sought or avoided.<sup>2</sup> Moral principles are to be learnt with a view to applying them to practical life. As a corollary of this theory, al-Ghazali says that an individual is required to study only those actions and beliefs that are relevant to him; thus, if he is engaged in a particular kind of trade he is required to know its ethics only.<sup>3</sup> Al-Ghazālī even goes so far as to say that knowledge which is not acted upon is no better than ignorance.<sup>4</sup> In so strongly emphasizing practice as the purpose of ethical study, al-Ghazālī is influenced by the Qur'ān and Tradition. He quotes a verse on the strong condemnation of those who have knowledge but fail to act accordingly. He also quotes a Tradition in which the Prophet is related to have described the heavy punishment to be inflicted upon those who do not transform their knowledge into action.<sup>5</sup>

Al-Ghazālī's ethics may also be epitomized as teleological<sup>ie</sup> for they evaluate acts by referring to their consequences. It teaches that man has a supreme end which is happiness in the hereafter; acts are good if they produce such effect on the

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1. I.D., IV, 272, 273, III, 343.

4. Ibid., III, 8.

2. Ibid., III, 334-38, IV, 19-21.

5. Ibid., I, 313.

3. Ibid., I, 14, II, 59.



soul as would lead to that end and bad if they prevent the soul from attaining it. Even devotional acts like ritual prayer, etc. are good because of their good consequences to the soul. (Indeed, al-Ghazālī's ethics may be regarded as an ethics for the soul as it may be called a happiness theory as distinct from hedonism, the view that pleasure is the supreme good). Thus acts are regarded as good or bad if they are conducive or detrimental to an objective end; in themselves they have no autonomous intrinsic moral value. Such a theory is called teleological which is identical with the consequence theory of ethics. Hedonism, eudaimonism or happiness theory and perfectionism all fall under this category. In his view of ethics as teleological al-Ghazālī agrees with <sup>other</sup> philosophers. Aristotle's concept of teleology in ethics is well-known. He was followed by Muslim philosophers like Avicenna, al-Fārābī and Miskawayh for they all judged the goodness or badness of an act in terms of its consequences in promoting or preventing happiness (sa'āda). Al-Ghazālī is against the Mu'tazilites who maintain that goodness (husn) and badness (qubh) are values intrinsic to moral acts and that the Shari'a commands or prohibits acts because they are in themselves good or bad. Such a doctrine is called deontological theory as against the teleological. Al-Ghazālī agrees with the Ash'arites only in holding that acts have no intrinsic moral value. The latter further say that an act is good simply because God commands it - bad, because He prohibits it; all acts are in themselves morally

neutral.<sup>1</sup> Such a doctrine is called an attitude theory as against a consequence theory of ethics. One aspect of the problem of the moral worth of an act is the manner of knowing its worth and this leads us to the study of the place of reason etc. in ethics, ~~in many of his works.~~

Al-Ghazālī explains his view of the place of reason etc. in ethics in many of his works. In the first 'book' of the Ihyā' he puts it in his division of the sciences. He classifies them into religious (shar'īyya) and non-religious (ghayr shar'īyya) sciences. A religious science is received from the prophets. A non-religious science is learned by reason as in mathematics or by experimentation as in medicine, or by hearing as in language. Non-religious sciences are divided into those commendable, e.g. medicine and mathematics, those condemnable, e.g. magic and talismanic sciences, and those permissible, e.g. history, poetry, etc. The praiseworthy religious sciences are of four kinds, namely the sciences of the sources (uṣūl), sciences of the branches (furū'), sciences of the preludes (muqaddamāt) and sciences of the supplements (mutammimāt). The sources are four - the Qur'ān, The Sunna or the Prophet's standard practice (as enshrined in 'sound' Traditions), the Muslims' consensus (ijmā') and the Companions' Traditions (āḥār as-sahāba). The branches are derived from

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1. For the reason for the Ash'arites' view and for their arguments against the Mu'tazilites' theory, see Michael Marmura, "Ghazali on Ethical Premises". P.F., (New Series), I (1969), 397-394; Hourani, "Two Theories of Value in Mediaeval Islam", M.W., 50 (1960), pp.269-76. Marmura wrongly asserts that al-Ghazālī's ethics is not teleological and so he wrongly says that al-Ghazālī does not agree with Avicenna on this point. Indeed, not only his moral theory but his view of nature is also teleological for he believes that God created every object so that it may serve some end or purpose.

these sources, not literally but by apprehending their meaning through men's reasons ('uqūl). Thus their meanings are widened until a meaning differing from the literal is indicated. An example of this is that the Prophet said "The judge should not sit in judgement while angry". Reason says that this Tradition also means that he should not sit in judgement while constipated or hungry or suffering from a painful disease. The sciences of the branches are two, namely, jurisprudence and that which deals with the well-being in the hereafter. This latter is the science of good and evil character-traits and conduct proceeding from them.<sup>1</sup> Thus, ethics is described here again as a religious science derived, through reason, from the sources of the Shari'a. The function of reason is only to understand their meaning.

In the third part of the Ihyā', al-Ghazālī again speaks of the sciences in connection with the method of knowing them. He here divides them into the rational ('aqliyya) and the religious (shar'iyya). The former are defined as those learned by reason and are divided into necessary sciences (al-'ulūm ad-darūriyya) and acquired sciences (al-'ulūm al-muktasaba). Rational sciences are again divided into this-worldly sciences, e.g. medicine, mathematics, astronomy, etc. and other-worldly sciences dealing with good and evil character-traits and conduct proceeding from them and with the knowledge of God, His attitudes and works. Religious sciences are defined as those derived from the prophets and revealed books accepted as authority (taqlīd). By means of these sciences man can purify his soul from vices and achieve perfection. Thus, ethics is

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1. I.D., I, 15.

described here as a rational science and also as a religious science. Al-Ghazālī reconciles these two views by saying that reason and the Shari'ah are complementary to each other; reason alone is insufficient in moral life and so is revelation; both need to be combined.<sup>1</sup>

"Rational sciences are insufficient for health of the soul although it is in need of them, as reason is insufficient in continuance of the means of health of the body but needs to know the properties of medicines and drugs by learning from physicians, for mere reason does not guide to it, but its apprehension after hearing is not possible except by reason. So hearing is indispensable for reason and reason is indispensable for hearing. One who calls to pure following in complete isolation of reason is ignorant and one satisfied with mere reason independent of the lights of the Qur'an, and the Sunna is deluded. Take care not to be in one of these groups and be a reconciler of the two principles, for rational sciences are like foods and religious sciences are like medicines and a sick man is harmed by food when medicine is absent. Similarly, the care of the diseases of the soul is not possible except by the medicines derived from the Shari'ah... One who .... becomes satisfied with the rational sciences is harmed by them as a sick man is harmed by food. The imagination of the one who imagines that rational sciences are contrary to religious sciences and that reconciliation of them is impossible is an imagination proceeding from blindness occurring in the eye of intelligence ('ayn al-basira)."<sup>2</sup>

Having thus described ethics as a religio-rational science, al-Ghazālī explains the method of knowledge in mysticism and relates ethics to it. He says that the kind of knowledge which is not 'necessary' is achieved sometimes by learning and at times as a gift from God. If it is a gift it may be given through the intermediary of angel or without any intermediary.

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1. Ibid., III, 14, 15; cf. Hourani, "The Dialogue between al-Ghazali and the Philosophers on the Origin of the World", M.W.<sup>48</sup> (1968) 310-11; Watt, Intellectual, p.150. For the views of the Mutazilites and the Asha'rites, see Marmura, "Premises", pp.394, 296-97.

2. I.D., III, 15.

The former is called revelation (wahy) which comes to the prophets and the latter is inspiration (ilhām) or mystical intuition (kashf). Divine mercy is open to all, but only these people can attain knowledge by mystical intuition who have completely purified their souls from vices and beautified them with virtues,<sup>1</sup> for at this stage there develops in the soul a power by which it "sees" the truth; it knows the truth directly without any reflection or reliance upon authority. Even before the completion of purification some knowledge of good and bad and of the unseen world is directly achieved. The mystic directly knows sometimes about the rightness or wrongness of individual actions, sometimes about a class of action and at times about some individual moral rule by which to judge actions to be right or wrong. He also knows the reason why an action is good or bad. Intuition does not simply state the moral worth of an action but also elaborates on this matter. Thus mystical ethics does not leave open the possibility of extreme subjectivism.

In the Ihyā', then, al-Ghazālī recognises the place of reason, revelation and mystical intuition in moral life. In the Muḥīdih, too, he approves them all: concerning his realisation of various truths about morals during the period of his retirement he says that he had realised them partly by immediate experience, partly by demonstrative knowledge and partly by acceptance in faith.<sup>2</sup> Regarding the philosophers' ethical teachings he says, "If they are reasonable in themselves and supported by proofs and if they do not contradict the Book and

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1. Ibid.

2. M.D., pp.68-71.



the Sunna, then it is not necessary to abstain from using them."<sup>1</sup> Here he is approving both reason and the Sharī'a. The function of reason in understanding revelation is repeated in this work: the prophets are the healers of spiritual diseases or vices. The way in which ritual prayer and other positive precepts of the revealed Law effect purification of the soul is known to them not by reason but by the light of prophecy which is higher than reason. One must accept their statements as true. The only function of reason is to inform men that the prophets are healers of spiritual diseases, for being unable to apprehend what is knowable by the eye of prophecy, reason entrusts us to prophetic revelation. It cannot proceed further. In what lies beyond, it has no part, save the understanding of what the prophets communicate to it.<sup>2</sup> Regarding knowledge of good and evil by direct experience al-Ghazālī says that the prophets have had the direct vision of the truth, in respect of all that is dealt with in revelations; should any other person walk along their way, he too will come to know something of truth by direct vision.<sup>3</sup>

Thus in a work (i.e. the Ihyā') whose composition started in the beginning of the ṣūfī period of al-Ghazālī's life and in a book (i.e. the Munqidh) composed one year or two before his death, he speaks of the place of reason, revelation and mystical intuition in morality. A similar view is found in the works of the mid-ṣūfī period.

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1. Ibid., p.41.

2. Ibid., pp.69, 70, 77-78, 79, 80, 83.

3. Ibid., pp.81, 83.

### Composite Character of al-Ghazālī's Moral Theory.

An important feature of al-Ghazālī's moral theory is its composite nature. This can be shown by an investigation into the sources of his ideas. It is true that such an investigation can by no means be exhaustive, yet his own statements about the sources and also the study of his thought enable one clearly to see the composite character of his theory. The chief source of al-Ghazālī's ideas is the writings of his sūfī predecessors which he studied just before his conversion to sūfism. He mentions them as al-Makkī's Qūt, Hārith al-Muhāsibī's works and various scattered statements (mutafarriqāt) of al-Junayd, ash-Shiblī and Abū-Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī and other discourses of leading mystics. The Qūt seems to be one of the sources through which al-Ghazālī becomes acquainted with these scattered sayings and discourses,<sup>1</sup> for this work contains more sayings of mystics and godly men than any other of the above mentioned books. Although al-Ghazālī does not mention Qushayrī's Risāla and Hujwiri's Kashf as his sources, it is certain<sup>2</sup> that he is influenced by these also. All these books were primarily concerned with well-being in the hereafter. Al-Makkī and al-Muhāsibī aimed at presenting a complete system of ethics dealing with this problem. They sought to bring about a perfect reconciliation between sūfism and the tenets of Islam. Al-Ghazālī is influenced by them in two ways, namely in the main trend of most of his teachings and in the ideas and illustrations of which he makes use in his works - very often their teachings

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1. Ali Hassan Abdul-Kader, The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd, London 1962, p.55.

2. Subkī, Tabaqāt, IV, 126.

form only the basis of his thought and sometimes they are directly borrowed to serve his own purposes. Their ethics, however, was in al-Ghazālī's view, incomplete in scope and defective in exposition.<sup>1</sup> He, therefore, sets out to construct a complete system of morals free from defects but on the lines suggested in the works of his sūfī predecessors. The especial characteristics of his greatest ethical work, the Ihyā', are described as follows:

"It is true that men have written several works on some of these matters, but this one differs from them in five ways: First, by clarifying what they have obscured and elucidating what they have treated casually. Secondly, by arranging what they have disarranged and organising what they have scattered. Third, by condensing what they have elaborated and correcting what they have approved. Fourth, by deleting what they have repeated and verifying what they have set down. Fifth, by determining ambiguous matters which have hitherto been unintelligible and never dealt with in any work. For although all have followed one course, there is no reason why one should not proceed independently and bring to light something unknown ..."<sup>2</sup>

These improvements al-Ghazālī sometimes makes by drawing upon materials from revealed books and the Sunna of the Prophet. The revealed scriptures by which he is influenced are more than one. They are the Qur'an, the Gospel, the Torah, the Psalms and the Leaves of Abraham. Statements quoted from the last

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1. Cf. Smith, "The Forerunner of al-Ghazali", <sup>J.R.A.S. 1936</sup> J.R.A.S., pp.65-78 where he discusses al-Ghazālī's indebtedness to al-Muhāsibī; he says that Muhāsibī was the most prolific writer of all the sūfīs whose works al-Ghazālī studied and to him al-Ghazālī owes more of his teachings than has been generally realised; A.J. Arberry, Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam, London 1950, p.68 where he says that al-Makki's Qūt "is of primary importance as being the first and a very successful attempt to construct an overall design of an orthodox sufism." This work "was carefully studied by al-Ghazālī and exercised a considerable influence on his mode of thought and writing."

2. I.D., I, 4.



three are few. References to the Gospel are many. Al-Ghazālī's occasional statement "I saw in the Gospel that ..." proves that he read the Arabic translation of the Gospel text. What version of the Gospel text he read is uncertain but there is little doubt that it was the ~~Matthew's~~ <sup>according to Matthew</sup> Gospel from which he quotes.<sup>1</sup> Of all the revealed books it is the Qur'ān on which he depends most. As for the detailed knowledge of the Sunna he seems to have acquired it from the Sūfīs' works especially the Qūt of al-Makkī which contains a large number of prophetic traditions<sup>2</sup> and also from his study of a few books on Tradition. It is true that al-Ghazālī is not <sup>a great scholar</sup> well-versed in the science of Tradition, but in his days as a student he studied <sup>al-Bukhārī's Ṣaḥīḥ under abū-Sahl al-Hafṣī,</sup> <sup>abū-Dāwūd's</sup> Sunan under al-Hākimī at-Tūsī and also Ahmad Shaybānī's work on the Prophet's birth under the <sup>Shaykh</sup> al-Khuwārī.<sup>3</sup> There are

1. S.M. Zwemer, "Jesus Christ in the Ihya' of al-Ghazali", M.W.<sup>7(1917)</sup> p.144. However, Constance F. Padwick who studied these quotations of al-Ghazālī from the Gospel which Zwemer had collected in his article said, "Although some of them approach the text of Matthew, and two ..... use the actual words of that Gospel, these are not the citations of a scholar with the Gospel before him". She then tried to trace the story of the sources used by al-Ghazālī for references to Christ. See his article "Al-Ghazali and the Arabic Versions of the Gospels.", M.W.<sup>(1939)</sup> 29, pp.130-40.
2. Since his sūfī predecessors used to support their teachings by Traditions without examining their validity, many Traditions in their works were spurious. Because al-Ghazālī copied from their books many Traditions in his books also are found false. Moreover, he had the habit of writing Traditions from memory (cf. Macdonald, "Life", p.76; Hourani, "Chronology", p.232); in doing this he could not escape from error altogether. The spurious Traditions are collected in Subkī's Tabaqāt, IV, 145-82. Ibn-al-Jawzī, a Hanbalite traditionist and an opponent of the sūfīs, accused al-Ghazālī of writing the Ihyā' for the sūfīs and filling it with false Traditions. See his Ṭaḥṣīs Iblīs, Cairo, 1928, p.165 also pp.353-55.
3. Subkī, Tabaqāt, IV, 109,<sup>110</sup> III, 127,<sup>105</sup>

also indications in the Ihyā' and the Kimīyā' that, while composing these works, al-Ghazālī consulted the Sahīh of al-Bukhārī and the Sahīh of Muslim. A systematic study of the two latter works, however, was not undertaken until the closing days of his life.<sup>1a</sup> The ethical ideas derived from the revealed books and the Sunna are sometimes kept intact and at times saturated with mystical colour.

Al-Ghazālī also seems to have derived ethical ideas from philosophical works on morals. In his time two kinds of these works were available in the Islamic world. One was the Arabic translations of Greek works on moral philosophy and the other was the works of the Muslim philosophers and of a few Christian translators and commentators such as Yahyā ibn-ʿAdī and Qusṭā ibn-Lūqā. Al-Ghazālī seems to have had direct acquaintance with the ethical works of Plato and Aristotle for in the Munqidh<sup>1b</sup> he speaks of Aristotle's criticism of Socrates and Plato and his difference from them and this indicates that al-Ghazālī studied their works. There is no proof of his direct acquaintance with the later Greek works on moral philosophy but he might have known them through the Muslim thinkers' works.<sup>2</sup> As for the ethical

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<sup>1b</sup> pp. 32, 53. *Id. ibid.*, pp. 109, 111

2. Simon van den bergh in his two articles, "The 'Love of God' in Ghazali's Vivification of Theology", J.S.S., I (1956), 305-21 and "Ghazali on 'Gratitude towards God' and its Greek Sources", S.I., VII-VIII (1957), 77-98, claims to have found the sources of some of al-Ghazālī's mystical thought in the ethical works of the Stoics and the Neoplatonics. He believes ("Gratitude", p. 88) that "Ghazali was acquainted either directly or more probably indirectly with these works". It is true that some of these works in their Arabic translations were available in the Islamic world in al-Ghazālī's time but he never mentioned any of the later Greek moralists in any of his books, so that there is no indication of his being directly acquainted with them. ʿAbd-ar-Rahmān Badawī

works of the Muslim philosophers it seems certain that he studied most of them: He himself said that he thoroughly studied the works of al-Fārābī and Avicenna. He speaks precisely about the content of the Rasā'il of the Ikhwān as-Ṣafā.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes he criticises ar-Rāzī's view. Some passages of his works have their parallel in the works of al-Kindī and Miskawayh. All these suggest that he studied the ethical works of these Muslim philosophers.

Many of al-Ghazālī's ethical ideas are similar to those in other philosophical works. The similarity is mostly in the meaning and in a few cases textual. Because of these similarities one tends to say that al-Ghazālī derived materials from these works. Some of his contemporaries did in fact maintain this view. He replied to them saying:<sup>2</sup>

"They think that these statements<sup>3</sup> are taken from the works of the ancient philosophers (al-awā'il), whereas the fact is that some of them are the product of reflections which occurred to me independently - it is not improbable that one shoe should fall upon another shoe-mark - while others come from the revealed Scriptures, and in the case of the majority the sense though perhaps not the actual words are found in the works of the ṣūfīs. Suppose, however, that the statements are found only in the philosophers' books. If they are reasonable in themselves and supported by proof, and if they do not

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contd. in his article, "al-Ghazālī wa Maṣādiruhū al-Yunāniyya", included in Abū-Hāmid al-Ghazālī fī adh-Dhikrā al-Mi'awīyya at-Tāsi'a li Milādih, ed. Zakī Najīb Maḥūd, Cairo, 1961, pp. 221-37, tried to relate al-Ghazālī's thought on a mystical virtue with Hermetic wisdom. Here too there is no proof of his direct acquaintance with it.

1. M.D., pp.41, 53.

2. M.D., pp.40-41.

3. These statements are described (M.D., p.40) as "Some of the statements in our published works on the sciences of the secrets of religion (ba'd al-kalimāt fī taṣānīfinā fī 'ulūm asrār ad-dīn)". The works mentioned here are obviously referring to al-Ghazālī's ethical works. That by these statements he means ethical statements is evident from the fact that he speaks of them when criticizing the philosophers' ethics.

contradict the Book and the Sunna, then it is not necessary to abstain from using them. If we open this door, if we adopt the attitude of abstaining from every truth that the mind of a heretic has apprehended before us, we should be obliged to abstain from much that is true."

In the first half of this passage al-Ghazālī denies that he took any of his statements from the philosophers' works. In the second half he is only expressing his attitude towards their ethics. This attitude he explains in other passages saying that their ethics is an amalgam of true and false principles. The true principles have their sources in the teachings of the prophets and the mystics while the false principles are the philosophers' own, and they mingled these with the true principles from an evil motive, namely, to deceive the men of weak intelligence, to make them readily accept their own false views. All these he puts in the following passage:

"Their whole discussion of ethics consists in defining the characteristics and moral constitutions of the soul and enumerating the various types of soul and the method of moderating and controlling them. This they borrow from the teaching of the mystics .... In their spiritual warfare they have learnt about the virtues and vices of the soul and the defects in its actions, and what they have learnt they have clearly expressed. The philosophers have taken over this teaching and mingled it with their own disquisitions, furtively using this embellishment to sell their rubbishy wares more readily. Assuredly there was in the age of the philosophers, as indeed there is in every age, a group of those godly men of whom God never denudes the world".<sup>1</sup>

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1. M.D., p.38. Al-Ghazālī's belief about the sources of the good elements in the philosophers' ethics seems to be true only partially. Their works doubtless contain citations from godly men's sayings. He mentioned (M.D., p.41) how the Brethren of Purity cited in their treatises a great number of Qur'ānic verses, prophetic traditions, early Muslims' account and mystics' sayings. In his Tahdhīb, Miskawayh, besides citing Qur'ānic verses, quoted or reproduced prophetic traditions in fifteen places, abū-Bakr's saying in two places, and al-Hasan's statement in one place; he mentioned the prophets Abraham and Adam in one place, the



Because of this amalgamation, al-Ghazālī says, the sound elements in philosophic ethics have not become unsound nor have the unsound become sound. There is no harm if one accepts the sound elements rejecting the unsound. But (a) since the general public are incapable of distinguishing them and (b) since the high opinion which they form about the philosophers' ethical books by seeing in them the prophets' maxims and mystics' sayings gradually leads them to slip into the philosophers' false views, the general public must be prevented from reading these books. There is, however, no harm if scholars study them and, separating out the truth from the falsehood, accept the former and convey it to those who need guidance about moral matters. But scholars must refrain from reading them in the common men's presence lest they may imitate them "just as the snake charmer must refrain from touching the snake in front of his small boy because he knows that the boy imagines that he is like his father

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contd. Companion 'Alī in four places; he appealed to the Shari'a in twenty three places and to the Sunna in one. Thus the philosophers took many of their ideas from the prophets and the mystics. But their works contain at least a few ideas which are sound even in al-Ghazālī's opinion (for these are found in his works also) but are not found in the sūfīs' books. Hence his view that all that is good in the philosophers' writings comes from this source is not wholly correct. Since many of the good principles in the philosophers' works are really taken from the prophets and the mystics, it may be said that T.J. de Boer is not wholly correct in his statement in his "Ethics and Morality (Muslim)", E.R.E., IV, 508 that al-Ghazālī is wrong in saying that the philosophers took ethical theories from the prophets and the mystics. Al-Ghazālī's view that the philosophers' motive in incorporating in their books conceptions from the prophets and the mystics is not in agreement with the general opinion. The general belief is that the philosophers' motive was to reconcile the Islamic tenets with the theories they received from the Greeks.

and will imitate him, and must even caution the boy by himself showing caution in front of him".<sup>1</sup>

Thus al-Ghazālī finds no harm in accepting those ideas which are sound in the philosophers' ethical works. A first-rate scholar, he is in a position to distinguish them from false views. The question now arises as to whether he really has taken the sound views from their works. In a passage quoted above he answers in the negative. In that passage he says (a) that the majority of those of his ethical teachings which are similar to philosophers' views come from the ṣūfīs' works. This statement will be true if such teachings are also present in these works which he thoroughly studied. Now if one carefully studies the works of al-Makkī and al-Muḥāsibī, one finds in them the majority of these teachings. The only difference is that in these works these teachings are not as clear, elaborate and systematic as in al-Ghazālī or in the philosophers. (b) Al-Ghazālī also says that some of his views which are similar to the philosophers' ideas he took from the revealed books. There is no doubt about it for the doctrine of the mean, etc. which are philosophic are also taught by the Qur'ān and the Sunna.

There are, however, some teachings of al-Ghazālī which are found, in a more or less similar form, only in the philosophers' works. Examples of these are his conceptions of the faculties of the soul, the basic virtues and their sub-divisions and so forth. (c) He claims that such views are the product of his own reflections and that their similarity to philosophers' ideas is only accidental. To ascertain the truth of this claim it is

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1. M.D., pp.39-43.



necessary to mention the nature of independent reflections in the case of moral matters.

At the level of reflection moral law is not regarded as something outside man, as beyond his understanding. Morality is not a law imposed upon him by God or His apostle or even by his fellow-men; it is a law that he himself can understand and choose for guidance because he sees that it makes good sense to do so. He himself discovers rightness or wrongness of action by reasoning; he thinks out a right course of action, and only after a careful deliberation does he judge an action to be right. Various factors influence the mind in this task; perhaps indirect supernatural guidance, certainly the customs and ethos of his own society and the sympathy which is a part of man's natural mental equipment. The customs of his own group are the data on which his reason works, for even the most original moralist does not begin a new moral system from the start; he begins by criticism of what is there already. In his reflection he is likely to make discoveries of different kinds. He will discover that certain customs which were formerly useful are now no longer so but may even be detrimental to the welfare of his society. So by his insight and reflection he rejects some of the accepted rules of morality. Even when the individual at the level of reflection does not himself make an active examination of the standards of his group and does not deliberately choose to accept or reject them he still feels that he can, when he chooses, decide for himself in moral matters. If the above is the nature of independent reflections in the case of moral problems, it may be said that while thinking independently

al-Ghazālī made an active and deliberate examination of the customs of his time. Indeed, his works abound with criticisms of the moral rules given by the various groups of intellectuals. The existing moral thoughts and practices formed the data of his reasoning. In his examination of the ethical principles of the philosophers he found that his reasoning agreed with some of them and disagreed with others which were detrimental to man's well-being in the hereafter. So he accepted the former as the product of his own thinking and said that their similarity with philosophers' views was only by chance, and rejected the latter as "rubbishy wares". It can be said, therefore that he took some<sup>1</sup> ideas from the philosophers' works but he took them on the authority of his own reason. Thus his claim that some of his teachings which agreed with philosophic ethics are the outcome of his independent reflections is true.

Thus al-Ghazālī derives his ethics from the three sources mentioned above. There may be some other source or sources from which he takes ideas but these three may be regarded as his main sources known from his own statements and from the contents of his teachings. These materials he adds to his own thoughts

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1. The word 'some' is very significant here, for careful comparison shows that even where al-Ghazālī agrees with the philosophers he does not agree with them on all that they said. The ideas set forth in the second book of the third part of the *Ihyā'* are in closer agreement with philosophic ethics than those set forth in other places. Agreement is greatest between the tenth section of this book and the tenth section of the second discourse of Miskawayh's *Tahdhib*, both dealing with children's training in good character. Even here too one finds that al-Ghazālī agrees with Miskawayh only partially. Therefore, the statement of H.A.R. Gibb and Quatzen in "Akhlāq", E.I., new ed. I, 336, that 'philosophical ethics in the form given to it by Miskawayh was fully accepted by such an influential theologian as al-Ghazālī ....' is not accurate.

and experiences. It is not that the ideas taken from various sources exist side by side unorganized; they are not mutually contradictory in their nature (for only those philosophic ideas are accepted which are in harmony with religion; the mystical ideas do not contradict the religious ideas for mysticism is only carrying out further the religious teachings). On the contrary, with his extraordinary genius, al-Ghazālī mingles the various elements and systematizes them into a well-ordered and consistent whole. In the process of systematization every element has undergone changes and modifications and received something of the especial characteristics of every other element. Thus the philosophic element has become more religious and also mystical, the religious element is enriched and enlivened with life-giving mystical spirit; the mystical element has become more rational, conceptual and organized.

On the whole, however, the mystical element remains dominant and hence al-Ghazālī's ethics may be characterized as primarily a religious ethics. In this way his ethics has achieved a composite nature. The study of ethics should result in action not merely in gaining knowledge of moral matters. Action should improve the condition of the soul which will lead to happiness in the hereafter, the central problem of al-Ghazālī's ethics. His ethics may, therefore, be regarded as a happiness theory and also teleological in character. It may also be epitomized as an individualistic theory of morals since it teaches that morality is an individual affair; it is a subject separate from politics and jurisprudence, but needs the help of both for its completion. It recognizes revelation, reason and mystical

intuition as the sources of moral obligation, as the authorities in moral life.

## CHAPTER II

### MAN'S NATURE AND HIS AIM

The starting point of al-Ghazālī's ethics, after determining its nature, is neither virtue and vice as dispositions of the soul, nor good and evil acts of the body which proceed from them, but the real man which is the soul.<sup>1</sup> The study of the soul from the moral viewpoint includes the study of its nature, its origin, its return after man's death, the purpose of its creation, the reason for its union with the body, its powers and the nature of its happiness and misery.<sup>2</sup> The problems of man's nature and his moral aim, which are of utmost importance in al-Ghazālī's ethics, are included in his consideration of the aspects of the soul. Some of his views on these subjects form the basis of his theories of character, virtue and vice and good and evil acts, while others give them meaning and significance. Clear understanding of these problems is also indispensable before the commencement of self-training in morals.<sup>3</sup> It is for these reasons that their study is regarded by al-Ghazālī as the beginning of ethics<sup>4</sup> and this study is made in the long introduction to the Kīmīyā.<sup>5</sup> In the Ihyā, however, these are discussed not in the beginning but in all its four parts (especially in the last two and more particularly in the third from which starts the treatment of man's inward self

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1. I.D., III, 2-3. 2. K.S., pp.10, 11, 79, 73, 409; N.M., p.31.

3. K.S., pp.10, 13; cf. Aristotle, Ethics, p.14.

4. This view of al-Ghazālī on the starting point of ethics agrees with those of Aristotle, Miskawayh and Ispahānī, for in the beginning of their works they dealt with the problems that form the backgrounds of their conceptions of virtue and vice, etc. Such an approach to ethics is absent in the works of his ṣūfī predecessors.



(bātin); this method is adopted in this work, despite asserting knowledge of the soul<sup>1</sup> in its different aspects to be the basis of ethics, probably because the learned men for whom it was mainly composed<sup>2</sup> are believed to be capable of gathering together the scattered ideas; but this procedure is abandoned in the Kīmiyā' since the common men to whom it is addressed<sup>3</sup> are unable to do so. Although the ideas scattered in the Ihyā' and a few other works are systematically presented in the introduction to the Kīmiyā' they require rearrangement under some new captions so that they may be briefly ~~stated~~<sup>considered</sup> here and at the same time serve as the background of the subsequent chapters.

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1. I.D., III, 2-3. 2. Ibid, p. 6.

3. K.S., p. 5. Most of the materials used in the Kīmiyā' have their sources in the Ihyā'; some ideas come from a few other works by al-Ghazālī. Since the general aim of this work is to provide the type of moral guidance which the common man may require, these materials are occasionally compressed, modified, rearranged and joined with new materials some of which concern very minor points, while others have considerable ethical importance. Sometimes these are made not only for the common man's sake but because of al-Ghazālī's greater maturity of mind, greater familiarity with the materials set forth in his previous works and greater experience of men and life. Thus the Kīmiyā' marks a development of his thought and must, therefore, constitute a source of any study of his ethics. Such an opinion of this work is also held by Harold Spencer who compared its introduction and the first two 'Pillars' with the Ihyā'. In the final observations of his study he discussed in detail the nature of the modifications, etc. and concludes that although parts of the Kīmiyā' may be described as a translation of the Ihyā' and other parts may justifiably be stated as an abridgment of it, it is certainly not merely a Persian translation nor a summary of the Ihyā' as M. Bouyges maintained; it is a work which indicates the development of al-Ghazālī's thought; see his unpublished Ph.D. thesis, A study of the Dependence upon al-Ghazālī's Ihyā' of the Introduction and the First Two "Pillars" of the Persian Kīmiyā'-i-Sa'adat, Edinburgh, July, 1962, pp. 1-44.



## Soul and Body and their Relations.

Man, al-Ghazālī believes, is created by God as a being composed of body and soul that is knowable by spiritual insight. The soul, which is the real man, is a divine spiritual entity of great subtlety (latīfa rabbāniyya ruhāniyya). The terms used by al-Ghazālī for it are qalb, rūh, nafs and ʿaql. Each term is given two meanings by him of which one is the soul and the other is different for each term.<sup>1</sup> He proves the existence of the soul and condemns the materialists (dahriyyūn) who believe that man is merely a higher type of animal with no lasting spiritual being.<sup>2</sup> The problem of the inmost reality (sirr) of the soul was discussed by philosophers but al-Ghazālī avoids its discussion because this is not permitted by the Sharīʿa on the ground that it is inapprehensible to most people and because its knowledge is not necessary for the practice of morality.<sup>3</sup> He discusses the difference between the soul and the body for this has direct relation to his ethical ideas. The soul, in his view, is a substance (jawhar) so that it exists by itself. It is not an accident (ʿard), i.e. its existence does not depend upon anything other than itself. It is the body which depends upon the soul for its existence and not vice versa. The soul differs from the body in another way. The former belongs to the world of spirit while the latter pertains to the material world. This is indicated in the Qurʾānic verse, "Surely His is the creation and the command; blessed is God, the Lord of the worlds". Since the characteristics of a material object are not to be found in the

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1. I.D., III, 3.

2. M.D., pp.30-31.

3. I.D., III, 3.

soul it cannot be the subject of the question 'how' or 'what'; the answer to the question 'what the soul is like' or 'how does it exist' is that the soul is not subject of howness or whatness. Al-Ghazālī's view that the soul is a substance agrees with that of all the sūfī doctors and most orthodox Muslims.<sup>1</sup> He observes that the muslim philosophers also rightly held this view - rightly because religion lends support to it - but they wrongly claimed that they can know this by reason alone and that therefore religion is not needed in this regard. By exposing the weaknesses in their rational proofs he concludes that these only give problematic, and not certain, knowledge concerning the soul.<sup>2</sup>

The soul, al-Ghazālī believes, is of the same origin as the angels. Its origin and nature are divine. It is not pre-existent (azalī) as Plato and others maintained. Each individual soul is created by God in the upper world, the world of the spirit ('ālam al-arwāh) at the moment when the human seed enters the womb<sup>3</sup> and the soul is then connected with the embryonic body. This view agrees with that of Avicenna<sup>4</sup> but contradicts the Tradition

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1. Hujwirī, Kashf, p.261. 2. T.F., pp.221-28.

3. A.D., p.28; <sup>ω</sup> <sup>a</sup> Hossein (in his "The self and the soul in Islamic philosophy", V.B.A., Kartic, VII, 1929-30; pp.279-308) quoted (pp.287-92) a few passages from Madnūn and K.S. and concluded (p.292) saying, "with the exception of one reservation, namely, that the soul has beginning, it is in a manner identified with God or the Universal Soul". He also said that according to Al-Ghazālī, the soul "is created because it has a beginning"; what al-Ghazālī "means by saying that it has a beginning seems to imply that individual souls proceed from the Universal; consequently they have a commencement". He, however, admits that al-Ghazālī uses some expressions from which it appears that the soul is created like other natural objects, but he tries to explain these away. All these are Hossein's wrong views on al-Ghazālī. He misunderstood the passages he quoted. Al-Ghazālī does not identify the soul with God or the Universal Soul; nor does he believe that the individual souls proceed from the Universal Soul. He is an upholder of the Qur'ānic theory of creation and combats the philosophers on the theory of emanation or procession. cf. W.R.W. Gardner, "Al-Ghazālī as a sufi" M.W., <sup>7(1972)</sup> p. 133 f.n.; (hereinafter referred to as "Sufi").

4. T.F., p.225.

in which souls are said to have been created long before the formation of bodies. Relying upon this Tradition Hujwiri and others held that though created the souls existed before the body. Al-Ghazali says that the souls and bodies referred to in this Tradition mean, respectively, the angels and the world with all that is in it. Having come into being the soul is everlasting (abadi). After death the body perishes but the soul survives. The concept of the everlasting nature of the soul is vital in al-Ghazali's ethics. To prove that the soul is not affected by death except that it loses that in which it resides he explains the meaning of death and its effect on the body only. The naturalists (tab'iyyun) are condemned by him as atheists for their view that the soul dies and does not return to life and so there is no future life.<sup>1</sup> Muslim philosophers, he observes, rightly believed in the everlasting existence of the soul but they were wrong in asserting that by reason alone they could know this with certainty. By examining their rational proofs<sup>2</sup> he finds that reason can only prove its possibility; sure knowledge of immortality is only given by religion.<sup>3</sup>

The reason for the soul's coming to the world of body is not to suffer punishment. Christianity teaches that Adam fell from Paradise because of his sin and this fall was designed as a punishment for him; owing to his sin there is a taint of sin in every individual whose place on earth is caused by it.<sup>4</sup> Such ideas are not to be found in al-Ghazali. In one place he only states that Adam's disobedience ~~of~~ <sup>towards</sup> God brought to him the misfortune of being

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1. M.D., p.31. 2. T.F., pp.224-28. 3. Ibid, pp.225, 235.

4. Claudia Reid Upper, "Ghazali's Thought Concerning the Nature of Man and Union with God", M.W., 42, pp.25-26; (hereinafter referred to as "Nature".).

taken out from Paradise.<sup>1</sup> In another place he states that what caused Adam to fall from Paradise was a matter accidental and foreign to his soul, i.e. an act of disobedience; this accidental matter made him unfit for living near to God, i.e. in Paradise which had been most suitable for him in conformity to his essence which was divine. In order to enable him to acquire that fitness or desert (istiḥqāq) through His guidance God sent him down to this world.<sup>2</sup> This is evident, al-Ghazālī says, from the Qur'ānic verse, "We said; Go forth from this (state) all; so surely there will come to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve". Every individual soul descends against its nature to this world to acquire fitness for Paradise, or provision (zād) for the hereafter.<sup>3</sup> Its lack of this fitness is not owing to Adam's faults but because it is created imperfect. This concept of acquisition of 'provision' and perfection is Qur'ānic and is strongly emphasized by the ṣūfīs. Al-Ghazālī elaborates it by mentioning the basic natural disposition (asl al-fiṭra) or the nature (ṭabʿ) of the soul.

Since the soul is divine in nature inclination towards good and aversion from evil are innate in it.<sup>4</sup> At birth it is a clean and pure substance from the genus of the angels' essence.

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1. I.D., IV, 46. 2. Ibid, III, 329; cf. Upper, "Nature", p.24.

3. K.S., p.78.

4. I.D., III, 51. However, there are two passages (ibid. pp.62, 64) where a child's soul is described as devoid of any inclination but able to be inclined to both good and evil. This neutral nature of the soul seems to have been spoken of in order to emphasize the need for child's training in good character. Al-Ghazālī's general position is what is given in the text for it is upon this that he bases many of his ethical ideas.

Inclination towards evil (which is produced in it after the creation of desire) is against its original divine nature. It is devoid of all knowledge but possesses capacity for it; this capacity is the characteristic of every human soul. Since its origin is divine and since it is of angelic nature it has a longing for the upper world and for accompanying the angels and feels this world alien to it; (this inclination is often subdued by an accidental attribute, namely, worldly desire).<sup>1</sup> Thus although the soul is created imperfect in both knowledge and character-traits, it has ability for both and in order to acquire them it descended to this world. Here it prepares for the happiness in the hereafter which is its permanent abode.<sup>2</sup> The question of the instrument of preparation is linked up with the problem of relationship of the soul to the body from a moral viewpoint.<sup>3</sup>

Every soul is given a body so that with its help it may acquire provision for its eternal life. The soul is the real man and the body is merely its instrument for acquiring 'provision' and perfection. The body is very necessary for the soul and care must be taken of it.

"Man's honour and his excellence ... consists in his ability for knowing God ... which in this world is his beauty, perfection and glory and in the future life is his treasure and equipment, and verily he prepares for this knowledge in his soul, not in any member of his members. It is the soul which knows God, draws near to Him, works for Him, strives towards Him and reveals what is with and before Him, and verily the members are followers, servants, and instruments which the soul employs and uses as a master uses his slave, as a shepherd makes use of his sheep and a workman his tool. The soul is that which is received by

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1. I.D., III, 12-13, 52-53. 2. N.M., pp.12, 32; K.S., p.63.

3. K.S., p.436.



God ... it is that which is veiled from Him ... it is that which is sought, that which is addressed and that which is censured. It is the soul which becomes happy ... and successful ...; it is the soul which is disappointed and miserable ..."

The soul uses the body as its vehicle. Although a separate substance, it is united with the body through the physical heart. The heart is the first channel of the soul's free use of the body; the relation between the heart and the soul need not be discussed for it has no concern with ethics.<sup>2</sup> Besides assisting the soul as its vehicle the body also serves it by containing the means to acquire 'provision' consisting of knowledge and action. All that is in the body is the assistants of the soul. Some of them are visible, e.g. the hands, the legs and all other external and internal parts. Others are invisible and they are three in number. The first is that which is the source of motive and impulse; motive for attaining what is useful is called desire and motive to repel what is harmful is named anger. The second is the power (qudra) which moves the limbs towards the objects of desire or against the objects of aversion. It is diffused in all the limbs particularly in muscles and nerves. The third is that which perceives. It has two divisions. One consists of the five powers located in the five parts of the brain. These powers are imagination (takhayyul), i.e. representation, retention (tahaffuz), reflection (tafakkur), remembrance (tadhakkur) and sensus communis. (al-hiss al-mushtarak). The way these five powers assist the soul in its preparation for the hereafter is explained by al-Ghazali and his description is similar to that of Avicenna<sup>3</sup> and Ispahani.<sup>4</sup> All these senses

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1. I.D., III, 2. A similar passage is to be found in K.S., p.78.

2. I.D., III, 2, 4, 7-8. 3. I.D., III, 5, IV, 95; K.S., pp.14.

4. Dhari'a, pp.14-15.



and powers are also found in the lower animals. However, there is one power which is especial to the human soul, namely, the power of knowledge and wisdom, i.e. reason. It knows the non-sensuous realities related to this world and the next. It also knows the consequences of actions; when the result of an act is perceived as good the will to do this is produced in the mind.<sup>1</sup> In these two ways reason assists the soul. These two functions of reason are almost the same as the functions of philosophers' theoretical and practical reason<sup>2</sup> although al-Ghazālī did not divide it into these two. In his views on the invisible assistants of the soul he is influenced by the philosophers. In the Tahāfāt he summarily discussed their theory of animal, human and vegetative souls and approves it on the ground that these are observable facts which are not contrary to religion.<sup>3</sup> But his own view in his later works as given above reveals some differences. In these works he calls the limbs etc. the soldiers of the soul (junūd al-qalb) implying thereby that his view of their being the assistants of the soul is Qur'ānic for the term 'soldiers' occurs in the Qur'ān; following Ispahānī, he also quotes a Tradition in which uses of the body for the hereafter are stated.<sup>4</sup> His difference from the Muslim philosophers who also regarded the body as an instrument used by the soul<sup>5</sup> lies in his emphasizing its being the instrument of preparation for the hereafter, whereas they emphasized it only to obtain happiness in this world.

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1. I.D., III, 7, 8. 2. T.F., pp.199-200. 3. Ibid, p.200.

4. I.D., III, 4, 9; cf. Dharīʿa, pp.14-15.

5. T.F., p.224; cf. Walzer, "Aspects", pp.224, 224-26 (for the Greek sources of their views).

Besides the above-mentioned relationship between soul and body al-Ghazālī speaks of another relationship which is, in essence, the same as interactionism. He says that although soul and body are distinct entities they affect each other and determine their courses mutually. Applying this idea to ethics he maintains that every act produces an effect in the soul provided it is performed deliberately, and this effect forms its quality. The nature of the quality as good or evil depends upon the nature of the act. After an act is repeated for some time its effect on the soul becomes established. An act performed without conscious deliberation cannot create any effect on the soul because what receives effect is the soul and this soul is unconscious. This is the reason why involuntary action has no relevance to ethics. As bodily action influences the soul, so the soul influences the body: if a quality is established in the soul relevant bodily action necessarily proceeds from it. The difficulty or readiness in the proceeding of an act depends on the weakness or strength of the quality. All this is the traditional interaction theory applied to morals. Al-Ghazālī adds to it something more which is very significant: a deed creates some effect on the soul; this effect causes the body to repeat the same deed; this deed produces some effect on the soul; this effect is added to the previous effect which is now strengthened; this again causes the body to repeat the same deed - the circular (dawr) process goes on indefinitely. The reason for interaction is the same as the reason for the link between the world of sense perception and the unseen world: God created the two worlds in such a way that they influence each other; since body and soul

belong to them respectively they must interact.<sup>1</sup> The circular theory is important in ethics. It was employed by Aristotle in his conception of virtue. Al-Ghazālī applies it to his whole ethics for it underlies all its basic problems, e.g., the need for devotional acts and avoidance of sin, getting rid of vices by means of opposite deeds, acquisition of virtues through habit formation, the reason for the occurrence of good and evil acts, and so on. Al-Ghazālī even goes so far as to say that it is for this interaction that the soul is brought to the lower world so that it may acquire perfection by means of bodily acts. Without taking this theory into consideration one cannot properly appreciate al-Ghazālī's ethical ideas; even some of them will appear self-contradictory to those who are not aware of his view on the circular relationship.<sup>2</sup> The interaction theory also underlies al-Makkī's mystical ethics<sup>3</sup>; he, however, neither explained it nor applied it to his ethics in the manner of al-Ghazālī. Since, according to this theory, all acts and qualities proceed from a few basic elements in man's constitution, al-Ghazālī describes these elements in detail.

#### The Elements in Man's Constitution.

In man's constitution there are certain basic elements which determine his nature and from which proceed all his bodily acts and mental qualities. These elements are blended in his

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1. A.D., p.67; I.D., IV, 29, III, 51-52, 145, I, 107; K.S., p.76.

2. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh also realised the importance of this theory; he rightly called it "a central doctrine of great interest", a "doctrine which underlies al-Ghazālī's whole philosophy"; see his "Place of the Religious Commandments in the Philosophy of al-Ghazālī", M.W. 51, p.184; (hereinafter referred to as "Religious Commandments").

3. Qut, I, 277.

constitution (tarkīb khilqa, tīna) in such a way that freedom from them is absolutely impossible; it is only from their evils that man can be free through moral effort and struggle. Every element has an effect on the constitution, and since the elements are four, the same number of natures is produced in every man. This nature is not the same as his original nature already considered, for the latter refers to the condition of the soul at the time of its creation while the former is its condition after a man's birth. The four elements develop not at once but one after another at different stages of his growth. The element produced first is animality (bahīmiyya) which is desire (shahwa). Its purpose is to seek the means by which the body, the vehicle of the soul, will remain in sound health and the human species will be preserved. It is responsible for the animal qualities of man, e.g. eating, drinking, sleeping and copulating. The second element is bestiality (sab'īyya) which is anger (ghadab). Its purpose is to ward off all that is harmful to the body. Because of this element man possesses the qualities and acts of the ferocious animals, e.g. envy, violence, rebuke etc. If not controlled to a moderate state these two elements cause moral destruction. In some people, however, these are created moderate; this is a gift of God to them. After this, at the age of discrimination (tamīyz) which is about seven, a diabolic (shaytāniyya) element is produced. It consists in making use of discrimination in searching out the ways of wickedness and in satisfying anger and desire through guile and deception. This element is responsible for such acts and qualities of man as deception, enmity, guiding people to evil, hypocrisy and so on.<sup>1</sup> It is repressed in those

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1. I.D., III, 9-11, IV, 14.

in whom desire and anger are created in moderation. The Prophet said that the devil in him submitted to him. Besides the diabolic element in man's constitution al-Ghazālī also believes in the devil as a being who is outside man but leads him to evil by exciting desire and anger and by giving him evil suggestions (wasāwis).

Last of all is manifested the lordly (rabbāniyya) element, the source of the qualities of love of praise, domination over others and knowledge of various sciences. This is present in the soul from the time of its creation by virtue of its being a divine entity - the reason why it is called an innate disposition (gharīza) - and now it only becomes manifest (yazharu). The four elements are set forth in two passages of the Ihyā' in one of which there is no mention of reason ('aql)<sup>1</sup> and in another although reason is mentioned in addition to them it appears to be identical with the lordly element,<sup>2</sup> but in the Arba'in<sup>3</sup> it is clear that reason is a separate power which develops after the manifestation of this element. It begins to appear at the age of discrimination, gradually develops at the age of maturity (bulūgh) and becomes perfect at forty when man becomes fully man. It is called the sixth sense existing in the soul. It is the essence of the soul, while desire and anger are its accidental states. Reason is a quality of the angels. That reason is man's essence is proved by following the philosophic tradition: the essence of each species is that which is peculiar to it; what is peculiar in man is reason; so it must be his essential nature. Its task is to apprehend the non-sensuous realities and the consequences of actions. Then the four elements are responsible for four kinds

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1. Ibid, IV, 14. 2. I.D., III, 9-10. 3. pp. 188-89.



of nature in every man. They are the roots of all man's inward qualities and outward behaviour. Al-Ghazālī's concept of the lordly element and the diabolic element is parallel to that of al-Makki. The other two elements are ~~very~~ implicit in him<sup>1</sup>, but vividly described in the philosophers' works. Two consequences follow from the above-mentioned ideas of al-Ghazālī. One is that man lies between the lower animals and the angels since he possesses the natures of both of them. The more one neglects the angelic nature the closer one becomes to the ranks of the lower animals and the devil; this is indicated in Qur'ānic verses. The more one develops it the more one resembles the angels. To resemble them and thus to be near to God is the goal of moral struggle. This view of al-Ghazālī on man's place agrees with that of Ispahānī.<sup>2</sup> The other consequence is that the principles of good and evil are present in man's very constitution. None is free from sin even though he be a saint; to be free from it is only possible for the angels for they have no desire and anger. This idea al-Ghazālī consistently applies to his ethics.

Closely related to al-Ghazālī's conception of the elements in man's constitution is his theory of the faculties of the soul. The Greek philosophers believed the soul to consist of parts or faculties or powers and they are followed by the Muslim philosophers and by al-Ghazālī. On the question of the number of the faculties, however, the Greeks were not unanimous. Plato conceived of three faculties and most of the muslim philosophers accepted his view.<sup>3</sup> Al-Ghazālī adds to it a fourth faculty so

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1. Qūt., I, 390.

2. Dharī'a, pp.17, 16.

3. Walzer, "Aspect", pp.221-22.



that in his opinion the parts or faculties (quwā) or non-material elements (maʿānī)<sup>1</sup> are four in number. They are the faculty of desire, the faculty of anger, the faculty of knowledge, i.e. reason and the faculty of justice among these three faculties (quwwat al-ʿadl bayna ḥāzihī ath-thalāth).<sup>2</sup> The first two faculties taken jointly are often referred to by al-Ghazālī as passion (hawā), a term frequently used in the Qurʾān and Tradition. Their combination is also called by him the carnal soul (nafs) which also occurs in these not infrequently. Though created in man for his benefit they are also the sources of evil in him; they are regarded by al-Ghazālī as the touch-stone of evil, i.e., everything to which they are inclined will be regarded as evil.<sup>3</sup> That the faculties of the soul are four is very clear in al-Ghazālī's works.<sup>4</sup>

The reason why justice as a fourth faculty of the soul is introduced by al-Ghazālī is also very clear. Plato and the Muslim philosophers regarded justice not as a faculty but as a virtue which is the combination of the virtues of the faculties of reason, desire and anger; al-Ghazālī also calls it a virtue which however is regarded by him not as their combination but as a virtue

1. This term is used in the A.D., p.177, to imply that the parts of the soul are not physically divisible but distinguishable by definition and in thought. cf. R.M. Frank "Al-Maʿnī. Some Reflections on the Technical Meaning of the Term", J.A.O.S., 89, pp.248-53.
2. I.D., III 47. This view is confirmed in the A.D., p.77, and reconfirmed in the K.S., pp.429, 431.
3. K.S., pp.10, 624-25; cf; Al-Makki, Qūt, I, 233, 234 where he calls the carnal soul the treasure of evil (Khizānat ash-sharr) and also the house of the enemy, the devil.
4. ʿAbdul Haqq Ansārī was right when he said that al-Ghazālī believed in four faculties of the soul; see his published Ph.D. thesis, The Ethical Philosophy of Miskawayh, Aligarh, 1964, p.108.

proceeding from a fourth faculty named justice.<sup>1</sup> He is led to postulate this faculty by his conception of the nature of passion or carnal soul i.e. desire and anger. He believes that they serve the good purposes for which they are created only when they are within proper limits (to be described later); but their nature is such that they always tend to exceed the limits; they are very rebellious and are purely irrational;<sup>2</sup> they are often excited by the devil whose business it is to lead man to evil through them - the reason why they are called the devil's agent (hizb ash-shaytān). It is reason which knows the proper limits and the evil consequences of exceeding them; its task is to order the passion to remain within the limits - the reason why it is called God's agent (hizb Allāh) - so that the soul may prepare for the hereafter.<sup>3</sup> But reason has no power to prevent passions from exceeding their limits. When it develops in man at the time of his maturity it finds passions very strong in the soul since they developed much earlier and are strengthened by their repeated satisfaction. Since they are completely <sup>ir</sup>rational they themselves cannot be amenable to reason and the Sharīʿa. There must be a faculty capable of enforcing upon them the dictates of reason and the Sharīʿa and keeping them under control (dabt) and this faculty is justice.<sup>4</sup>

"The faculty of justice is the power; its example is like the example of an executor who passes <sup>on</sup> the indication of reason, and anger is that to which the indication is passed ...". "The faculty of justice lies in controlling desire and anger under the indication of reason and the Sharīʿa".<sup>5</sup>

1. I.D., III, 47-48.

2. K.S., pp.15, 64, 771.

3. Ibid, pp.16, 64.

4. Ibid, pp.64, 647.

5. I.D., III, 47.



This controlling function of justice and purely cognitive task of reason are more clearly stated in the Kīmiyā.<sup>1</sup> Thus al-Ghazālī believes that man is given by God a separate faculty of justice with the power of keeping passions under control. The lower animals are deprived of it as of reason and hence they are always guided by their passions. Justice as the faculty of power is sometimes called by al-Ghazālī the motive of religion (bā'ith ad-dīn) while the demands of desire and anger he terms the motives of passions (bā'ith al-hawā). The two motives are at war with each other in the soul of every sane adult human being.<sup>2</sup> The latter motive can only be weakened by self-training. The reason why Aristotle did not formulate a faculty like that of justice is also linked with his conception of the nature of the appetitive soul. Unlike al-Ghazālī, he believed that although distinct from and often opposed to the rational soul, it has an inner urge to be amenable to reason; hence there was no need of assuming any such faculty as would force it to obey reason.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the same line of thought concerning the natures of

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1. pp. 629-30.

2. In the A.D., pp.211-12, where these two motives are discussed very briefly the motive of religion appears at first sight to be identical with reason, but careful reading of the passages makes it clear that it is something different. In the I.D., IV, 56 and the K.S., pp.667-68 where the two motives are discussed in great detail it is very clear that motive of religion is not the same as reason: reason is described as the source of guidance and motive of religion as power, and guidance is regarded as superior to power. Clearly, then, they are two different faculties. Further, it is said that guidance, the function of reason, is given by the angel placed at man's right side (sāhib al-yamīn) and the power of motive of religion is given by the angel at his left side (sāhib ash-shimāl). This also clearly shows that reason and motive of religion are two different faculties. That they are not identical is further evident from al-Ghazālī's statement "The two angels are entrusted with the two soldiers (jundayn)".

3. Aristotle, Ethics, pp.39-40.

appetitive and irascible souls was the cause of Plato's postulating no fourth faculty. The introduction of the faculty of justice by al-Ghazālī is important for it has bearing upon his theories of root virtues, of mortification and of moral responsibility. Since the faculties of justice and reason are not present in children and the insane, they do not know good and evil and also cannot control their passions; so they are incapable of refraining from evil, and those who are incapable fall outside the domain of ethics. Even at the age of discrimination which is about seven children are not morally responsible to God because their faculty of guidance has just begun to appear and has not yet become capable of telling them what is harmful in the next life; it can only tell them what is harmful in this life - a reason why they feel ashamed of wrong-doing - and hence even at this age they are morally responsible to men.<sup>1</sup>

Besides these four faculties al-Ghazālī also speaks of another which is higher than reason and whose effect is immediate experience (dhawq). Its chief concern is with the non-sensuous matters of this world and the next and especially with divine affairs; it also has to do with the deeper meaning of ethical matters. By it man experiences these i.e. knows these directly and without reason. This faculty, unlike reason which is present in all adult, sane human beings, develops only in the prophets and those saints who have completely purified their souls.

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1. I.D., IV, 57.



This is the highest power in man.<sup>1</sup> True, it is not mentioned in any of the passages on the four faculties. The reason is that the four faculties are mentioned as the basis of the root virtues in man, as that from which the virtues proceed, whereas the faculty of immediate experience is not a basis of any virtue; rather it develops after acquiring all the virtues and getting rid of all vices. Al-Ghazālī's recognition of this faculty is like that of al-Makkī,<sup>2</sup> while his views on the other four faculties, especially the first three is in line with that of the philosophers.

### Conception of Happiness.

Al-Ghazālī's conception of happiness has two aspects, negative and positive. The negative part deals with what is not happiness and its discussion logically comes first for it prepares the ground for the positive part which concerns the real nature of happiness. He first attacks the general hedonistic view that the aim (maqṣūd) of human life is to enjoy the pleasure (ladhdha) and delight (na'īm) of this world. He considers this view as wrong for two reasons. (a) The pleasure of this world lasts for a limited

1. Al-Ghazālī's students are not unanimous on the question whether he really believes in a faculty higher than reason. Jabre denies any such faculty; he holds that where it is said that prophets and saints know through immediate experience the meaning is that they know by reason in its original purity and not by any higher faculty; see Certitude, pp.147, 263, 185. Watt (Intellectual, pp.164-66, 85; "Study", pp.125-28 where Jabre is criticized), Upper ("Nature", pp.27, 24), Smith ("Al-Ghazali on the Presence of God", M.W.<sup>23(1933)</sup>, p.17) and others maintain that al-Ghazālī believes in a faculty higher than reason. This dispute is a part of the controversy on the question of essential unity or modification of the thought which is presented in his authentic works. A study of the arguments of both groups and of the relevant passages in al-Ghazālī's works convinces the present writer that the truth lies in the view of the latter group. Since this highest faculty is not directly related to al-Ghazālī's ethics its further discussion in the present study is irrelevant.
2. Qūt, I, 509 where he speaks of intuitive (kashfī) knowledge and supports it by a Tradition.



period of time i.e. until man's death. The duration of this world is not a thousandth part of that of the next and is indeed incommensurable with it for it is eternal; eternity is such that if the world is full of grains and a bird picks up one every million years, the grains will all be gone at last but eternity will suffer no diminution. The life of one hundred years in this world is even less than three days in comparison to the life in the next. The delight in so short a time cannot be man's aim in life.<sup>1</sup> (b) The pleasure of this world is impure; every form of it is imperfect and mixed with pain. Such has been its nature up to the present time and the same will be its nature until Doomsday. Pleasure, therefore, cannot be the goal of life.<sup>2</sup> This, however, does not mean that all forms of pleasure are to be condemned in al-Ghazālī's view. On the contrary, he values the pleasures of knowledge,<sup>3</sup> of converse with God, of intimacy with Him produced from constant remembrance of Him, and of the performance of other good deeds. He also approves the pleasures of lawful sexual intercourse, of the necessary amount of food, clothing and shelter. What he condemns is seeking the pleasures of this world, physical or intellectual, as the goal of life.<sup>4</sup>

Al-Ghazālī also rejects five other views each of which regards some particular worldly thing as the goal of life. The first is the view of those peasants and artisans who lack firm rooting in religion. They believe that man's object is only to live in this world for some time; so they work hard to acquire

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1. I.D., III, 4-5, 175, 180, 190-91, 214, IV, 52, 109, 8, 187, 348, 357.

2. Ibid., IV, 52, 107; cf. Aristotle, Ethics, p.5.

3. K.S., pp.70, 839-41.

4. Ibid., p.70.

food which they take so that they may get strength to work for it again; this goes on as a routine until their death. (2) The sensualists maintain that man's goal is happiness and this happiness consists in the gratification of desires for food and sex; the more these are satisfied the greater is the happiness. This view is wrong because it reduces man to the rank of the lower animals and even below it for some of them can eat and copulate more than man. (3) Some people say that happiness, the aim of life, lies in possessing enormous wealth and affluence; the wealthier one is the happier one becomes. (4) Some people believe that happiness consists in widespread fame. This they acquire by such means as beautiful dress and splendid vehicles and by embellishing the external walls of their houses and other measures which easily attract attention. (5) Others opine that happiness lies in respect and influence; so efforts should be made to gain political power for this is the greatest means of commanding respect and creating influence.<sup>1</sup> In rejecting these views as false al-Ghazālī may have been influenced by al-Fārābī to a certain extent, but Aristotle's influence upon him is more apparent. Aristotle discarded wealth, fame etc. as happiness but retained them as aids to it unconditionally;<sup>2</sup> al-Ghazālī holds the same opinion with the only difference that in regarding them as aids he sets a condition to them, namely, in the case of most people that should not be more than is necessary.

While in the above views happiness is regarded as something obtainable in this life, there are two opinions in which it is believed to be otherworldly. Although al-Ghazālī also looks upon

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1. I.D., III, 198, IV, 366-67. 2. Ethics, pp. 5, 7, 8.

it as otherworldly, there are reasons for which he rejects them as wrong. One of these views is that this world is a place of affliction and toil while the hereafter is the abode of happiness for everyone whether or not he prepares for it in this life; so the right thing for man is to kill himself in order to escape from the toil of this world. This belief is ascribed by al-Ghazālī to certain worshippers (ʿubbād) of India who destroy themselves by fire. This is rejected by him because it contradicts the teaching of the Shariʿa that without the relevant works happiness is impossible to attain; destroying oneself, moreover, is a grave sin which bars man from happiness. The other view is that it is not enough for man just to kill himself; rather first he should completely get rid of his human qualities (sifāt bashariyya). With a view to uprooting their faculties of desire and anger they engage in so vigorous a mortification that as a result of it some of them die, some become insane and others fall ill so that worship becomes impossible for them. This view is also wrong according to al-Ghazālī because uprooting of desire and anger is neither necessary nor possible - a concept which will be discussed later. Besides the above-mentioned views on happiness there are, he says, many others the total number of which is seventy-odd of which only one is true<sup>1</sup>, and this true view forms the positive aspect of his theory of happiness.

The true view is that the human end is otherworldly happiness (as-saʿādat al-ukhrawiyya) which can be obtained if the necessary preparation for it is made in this life by controlling the human qualities and not by uprooting them.<sup>2</sup> There are some this-worldly

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1. I.D., III, 199. 2. Ibid, pp.17, 45, 202, 89, IV, 139, 86;  
cf. Aristotle, Ethics, p. 7.

goods which serve as means to otherworldly happiness and al-Ghazālī says that these can be called forms of happiness (sa'ādāt) only metaphorically. Man's conduct, he says, will be considered good if it is conducive to happiness in the hereafter.<sup>1</sup> This happiness was the central theme of all prophets' teachings, and it is to encourage people to it that all the Scriptures were revealed; this is known from the Sharī'a and also from the spiritual insight of the sūfīs.<sup>2</sup> Greatness in God's sight lies in achieving otherworldly happiness; those who will fail to attain it are worse than the lower animals for the latter will perish while the former will suffer misery.

Otherworldly happiness has four characteristics, namely, continuity without end, joy without sorrow, knowledge without ignorance and sufficiency (ghinā) after which nothing more is needed for perfect satisfaction.<sup>3</sup> This view al-Ghazālī takes from Ispahānī with slight modification. Influenced by the Qur'ān and Tradition he believes that the abode of such happiness is Paradise while that of misery is Hell. Men's fates will be declared on the day of resurrection but the effect of happiness and misery begins immediately after their death. When the deceased is laid in the grave his soul is returned to his body so that he may answer interrogation concerning God's unity and prophethood; on the day of resurrection it will again be returned to a body; the resurrected man will thus have both body and soul and be immortal in this form.<sup>4</sup> Bodily resurrection is advocated in al-Ghazālī's

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1. Ibid, IV, 139.

2. Ibid, 17, 45; N.M., p.45; cf. Al-Makkī, Qūt, I, 175, 210, 218, 224, 113, 156 where he held the same view.

3. I.D., IV, 89; cf. Ispahānī, Dharī'a, pp.35, 37. 4. I.D., IV, 422.

works composed after his conversion to sūfism<sup>1</sup> as well as in his Tahāfat where the philosophers are condemned as atheists<sup>2</sup> for their denial of it and their rational arguments for its impossibility have been refuted.<sup>3</sup> Happiness and misery are, according to him, both physical and spiritual. The physical will not begin until man enters Paradise and Hell;<sup>4</sup> from that time onwards physical and spiritual happiness or misery will be united.

Bodily punishment in the grave in the form of bites of snakes and scorpions as spoken of in Tradition he explains as mental pain caused by evil qualities of the soul whose spiritual form (mathal rūhānī) appears to the deceased's mind.<sup>5</sup> Bodily happiness and misery al-Ghazālī discusses following the Qur'ān and Tradition for he believes that these can only be known <sup>from</sup> for the Sharī'a. Spiritual happiness and misery he regards as superior to the physical and says that the Sharī'a did not describe them in detail because most people fail to understand them.<sup>6</sup> Religious scholars did not speak of them for the same reason or because they themselves could not apprehend them.<sup>7</sup> The philosophers denied bodily happiness and misery and their rational proofs have been

1. K.S., p.80. 2. pp.245, 229. 3. Ibid, pp.236-48.

4. Ibid, p.241; A.D., pp.293-94, 365.

5. A.D., pp.284, 289; K.S., pp.84, 88. In this latter work (p.83) punishment of the grave is said to be both mental and physical, but in page 85 the physical pain is explained away as mental.

6. K.S., p.53. In I.D., bodily pleasures and pain are discussed elaborately. In K.S. these are mentioned briefly because everyone can easily understand them; spiritual states are elaborately dealt with in this work because only few people who know the soul can apprehend these by themselves (p.83). For these same reasons, in A.D. which is an abridgement of I.D. bodily pleasure and pain are omitted and the spiritual states are described in detail.

7. Ibid., p. 7.



refuted by him.<sup>1</sup> They only affirmed these spiritual states and most of their views he accepts as true; he only opposes their claim that mere reason gives them final knowledge of these things; to him these are known with certainty from the Sharī'ah.<sup>2</sup> In the works composed during the sūfī period of his life he appeals mainly to the spiritual insight (mushāhada-i-bāṭini, basīra) of himself and of the sūfīs in general<sup>3</sup> - an insight which is higher than reason.<sup>4</sup> A true sūfī, he says, sees the conditions of the hereafter in his experience of seeing (dhawq-i-mushāhada); this view he discusses in a separate section entitled "Seeing Paradise and Hell in this World."<sup>5</sup>

The cause of happiness is not God's pleasure in the virtuous, nor is misery caused by His anger towards the vicious. Al-Ghazālī believes that God is free from change; He is not angry with man's disobedience to Him or pleased with his act of obedience;<sup>6</sup> God's anger, pleasure and His capture of man (mākhūdh) are all spoken of in the Sharī'ah in keeping with men's capacity of understanding; the fact is that happiness and misery are caused by the conditions of the soul. If at the time of a man's death there exist in his soul unbelief or vicious qualities these bring in misery as necessarily as poison causes death or magnets attract iron. This is the reason for al-Ghazālī's great emphasis upon the improvement of the soul; all virtuous actions are done for the good of the soul; no act is done in order to please God.<sup>7</sup>

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1. T.F., pp.229-36. 2. Ibid, p.235.

3. A.D., pp.293, 286; K.S., pp.95, 97, 99-101.

4. K.S., pp.99-101. 5. K.S., pp.82-83, 88.

6. A.D., pp.301-03, 190; K.S., pp.748-49. 7. I.D., IV, 19.

In accordance with the states of their souls people in the hereafter will, as men of insight know, be split into four groups.<sup>1</sup> A group, the destroyed, will suffer everlasting misery in Hell. This is the technical meaning of destruction (halāk) in al-Ghazālī's ethics. But this term is usually used in it in a loose sense of great suffering for a long time. Al-Mukki used it for any suffering in Hell, temporary or permanent.<sup>2</sup> The use of destruction to mean the annihilation of being - an anti-Islamic idea - is absent in al-Ghazālī but present in al-Fārābī who believed that the souls of the ignorant (bulha) will perish. Another group, 'The punished', will suffer misery in Hell but will later be transferred to Paradise. Happiness or salvation (najāt) does not refer to these people's attaining to Paradise. A third group consisting of infidels, children, the insane and those unaware of religion will be neither in Hell nor in Paradise but in A'rāf, a place between them, where there will be no reward or punishment. They are 'the saved'. Salvation technically refers to their condition i.e. absolute escape from Hell but entitlement to no reward. Al-Ghazālī's concept of A'rāf is Qur'ānic. In philosophers like Avicenna and al-Fārābī this concept is absent. However, a state of neither happiness nor misery but of ease (rāha) through God's mercy is recognized by Avicenna for the souls of those ignorant people who are not wicked in this life. Even such a state was not recognized by al-Fārābī; he believed that

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1. Ibid., pp.20-28. In T.F. pp.229-34 al-Ghazālī reproduces the philosophers' three-fold classification of man in the hereafter and their views on men's happiness and misery. His own classification of men accords with Qur'ānic teaching; only his conception of men's spiritual happiness and misery and their causes bears the influence of philosophy.

2. Qūt, I, 220.

these souls will perish. A fourth group 'the successful', will pass into Paradise without first entering Hell. Thus success (fawz) consists of two elements, namely, absolute escape from suffering in Hell (this does not negate suffering, on the day of resurrection, of delay in account) and getting reward in Paradise. Success is identical with happiness.<sup>1</sup> The term 'success' (falāh) is also used as synonymous with them. The term salvation in its strict sense as given above is different from all these. Al-Ghazālī makes it clear when he says, "Salvation is just safety (salāma) and not happiness or success".<sup>2</sup> But he loosely uses salvation to mean what the other terms mean, and in this he agrees with al-Makkī.<sup>3</sup>

Happiness in Paradise has two major grades, lower and higher. The former consists in the sensual pleasures of foods, drinks, company of houris, beautiful dress, palaces and so on. This grade is appropriate to the lower class of the virtuous referred to as the pious (abrār, sālihūn), the god-fearers (muttaqūn) and the people of <sup>the</sup> right (ashāb al-yamīn). The sensual pleasures will perfectly satisfy them for it is for these that they prepare in this life. The higher grade of happiness consists in nearness to God and gazing upon His glorious face for evermore. The vision (ru'ya) of God or encounter (liqā') with Him is the highest happiness, the ultimate good and the last of all forms of God's bounty. Nothing in Paradise will be as pleasure-giving as this vision. The sensual pleasures are worthless when compared to the pleasure of contemplating the divine beauty. The former resemble the

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1. I.D., IV, 110, 111, 214, 89, 124. 2. A.D., pp.23-24.

3. Qūt, I, 219-20, 364. For the meaning of salvation cf. Gardner, "Sufi", p.131.

pleasures enjoyed by grazing animals while the latter is the spiritual pleasure referred to in the Qudsī Tradition, "I reserved for my virtuous servants what no eye ever saw, no ear ever heard and which never occurred to any man's mind." and in the Qur'ānic verse "So no soul knows what is in store for them of that which will refresh the eyes: a reward for what they did." This grade is appropriate to the higher class of the virtuous consisting of prophets and those who are near to them. These latter are usually mentioned as the saints (awliyā'), the most truthful (siddiqūn), those brought near to God (muqarrabūn), the lovers (muhibbūn) and the sincere (mukhḥṣūn). The higher happiness will be granted to them because it is for this that they work in this life. Each grade of happiness has innumerable sub-grades; the lowest sub-grade of the higher grade touches the highest sub-grade of the lower grade.<sup>1</sup> Most of al-Ghazālī's ideas on the grades of happiness have their source in the Qur'ān and Tradition; in linking them with sūfism, however, he is indebted to al-Makkī.<sup>2</sup>

The Means to Happiness.

Happiness is attainable in the hereafter should the necessary preparation for it be made in this life. Making this preparation is equivalent to the acquisition of the 'provision' for which the soul descended to this world of water and clay. There are several forms of good by which man can prepare for happiness and these are

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1. I.D., IV, 406-9, 22, 238, 286-87, 24, 25, 320-32, 226-27, 238, 340, 28, 195-96, 465-71, III, 11.

2. cf. Qūt, I, 175, 210, 218, 220, 224, 113, 156. The Qur'ānic verse and the qudsī Tradition which al-Ghazālī quotes to support his ideas of spiritual happiness were also quoted by the Muslim philosophers; in T.F., pp.275-76 he criticizes them saying that these never imply the non-existence of physical happiness.

called the means (wasā'il). These means are divided by al-Ghazālī into four categories each of which includes four forms of good; the total number of the means thus amounts to sixteen. All the means are not of equal importance for happiness: some of them are absolutely necessary and others are only useful; some are very near to happiness while the relation of others to it is comparatively remote.<sup>1</sup> The four groups of means are

The 'goods' of the soul (al-fadā'il an-nafsiyya)

The bodily 'goods' (al-fadā'il al-jismiyya)

The external 'goods' (al-fadā'il al-Khārijiyya)

The 'goods' of divine grace (al-fadā'il al-fawfiyya)

The means included in each group are called fadā'il, the plural of fadīla. This term is not used here in its technical sense in which it refers particularly to the four root virtues of the soul together with their sub-divisions and generally to any quality of the soul, for this term is applied to the last three categories of means which are not virtues of the soul. The term is used in its ordinary sense expressible by such words as merit, worth, goodness and the like. Fadā'il, then, here simply means good things, worthy things by which man can attain to happiness; it does not mean virtues. Nor is fadīla used here as synonymous with fadl which means free gift or gratuity, bounty or grace,<sup>2</sup> although both terms have the same verb-root; the

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1. I.D., IV, 89-90, III, 202; cf. Dhārī'a, pp.37-38, 35, 65; Aristotle, Ethics, p.8. In the number of means, in their classification into four groups, in their description and in the determination of their mutual relationship al-Ghazālī is strongly influenced by Ispahānī who discussed these all in his Dhārī'a, pp.35-45. Ispahānī was, in turn, influenced by Aristotle (Ethics, pp.8, 28-31), Stoics (van den Bergh, "Ghazālī on 'Gratitude towards God' and its Greek Sources", S.I., VII, 96) and Miskawayh (Tahdhīb, pp.44). Al-Ghazālī only elaborates Ispahānī's views and makes them more religious and sūfistic.

2. Lane, Lexicon, I(6), 2412.



reason is that this meaning of fadīla though correct for the last group, is incorrect for the others (for these are not free gifts; they are gifts only in the sense that these are ultimately from God) whereas the term is also used for these groups. So it cannot be said that this term is used here in order to imply that the means to happiness, especially the last group, are free gifts (fadl) from God. The fact of their being gifts, however, is expressed by using for them another word, niʿam (gifts) and by discussing them in the 'Book of Gratitude to God'. The first three categories are gifts of God in the sense that they come ultimately from Him; the last group is a free gift inasmuch as in three of its four forms it is not in man's control. The view that the means to happiness are gifts is very significant for it makes happiness in part a divine gift. This point will be clear from the discussion of all the classes of means.

The 'goods' of the soul are, according to al-Ghazālī, faith (īmān) and good character (ḥusn al-khuluq). Faith is divided by him into 'knowledge of revelation' (ʿilm al-mukāshafa) and practical knowledge (ʿilm al-muʿāmalā). Thus faith is regarded here as a synonym of knowledge. Good character is divided into temperance and justice. The former is repression of desire and anger and the latter is their repression to the extent that neither all their demands are shunned nor are all fulfilled but moderation is observed. This is a loose description of good character as against its strict sense in which it consists of four qualities of the soul - wisdom, courage, temperance and justice - together with their sub-divisions. It is described here as consisting of the last two qualities in order to keep the number of the soul's

'goods' four, but by it is meant here not only all these four qualities and their sub-divisions but also all other qualities of the soul. The description of good character as temperance and justice includes all the qualities of the soul for these two concern the repression of desire and anger, and it is upon this repression that acquisition of all the good qualities depends. The four 'goods' of the soul, then, are reducible to (a) faith or knowledge and (b) all the good qualities of the soul. These two are the nearest means to happiness.<sup>1</sup> Since improvement of the soul through good qualities is achieved by means of action ('amal), the nearest means to happiness emerge as knowledge and action. Indeed, this is what al-Ghazālī emphasizes in all his ethical works. Even when discussing the last three groups of means he refers to the 'goods' of the soul sometimes as knowledge, good character and action and at other times as knowledge and action. The meaning of these two in his ethics will be explained later.

The bodily 'goods' too are regarded as essential means to happiness for without them the 'goods' of the soul cannot be acquired perfectly. Although both groups are essential, the rank of the latter is below that of the former. The bodily 'goods' are health, strength, long life and beauty. The way the first three serve as means to happiness is obvious: what are most needed for happiness are the 'goods' of the soul which, in final analysis, are found to be knowledge and action, and these two cannot be pursued without sound health and adequate physical strength. Long life enables man to take better preparation for happiness through these two - the reason why the Prophet once described happiness as long

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1. I.D., III, 202; cf. Dharī'a, p.35.

life spent in obedience to God. The need for beauty for happiness, however, is little but not entirely nil: a handsome man, who is naturally liked by others, can pursue his worldly affairs more easily than a man ugly to look at and thus can have more time and opportunity to acquire knowledge and to do good deeds. By beauty al-Ghazālī means not that which excites sexual urge but a tall figure with harmoniously developed limbs and such facial appearance as creates a good impression on others.<sup>1</sup>

The goods exterior to the body are wealth, influence, family and noble birth. These are not essential for happiness but only useful to it. Their status is below the status of bodily goods. Wealth serves as useful means in many ways: it makes its possessor free from the care of the necessities of life and thus enables him to devote more time and attention to knowledge and action. By wealth various kinds of obstacles to them can easily be removed. Influence is a useful means in the sense that he who lacks it is always humiliated and insecure from enemies who disturb his acquisition of knowledge and doing good deeds and keep him constantly worried, but one who has some influence can repel them and prepare for happiness safely and securely. Wife, children, friends and relatives are all useful inasmuch as they help man in his worldly affairs in various ways and thus give him better opportunity to prepare for happiness. Children in particular are like his hands, legs and other limbs with which he performs good actions. In the case of most people external goods are useful only when these are of moderate amount; more than this is an impediment to happiness for them and hence desires for it are

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1. Ibid. pp.245, 295, IV, 91, 137, 71, 72. cf. Dhārīʿa, pp.35, 40-41; Aristotle, Ethics, pp.7, 9.

regarded by al-Ghazālī as 'destructive qualities of the soul' to be described in a later chapter. This conception of wealth, etc. is not inconsistent with what has earlier been said concerning them, for there it is denied that these are happiness themselves and here these are only regarded as means to happiness. By noble birth al-Ghazālī means a birth not in a rich family but in a religious family cultivating knowledge and piety. One born in such a family inherits traits of good character from his ancestors, and in this way noble birth constitutes a means to happiness.<sup>1</sup>

The 'goods' of divine grace (tawfīq) are divine guidance (hidāya), divine direction (ruḥd), divine leading (tasdīd) and divine strengthening (taʿīd).<sup>2</sup> Grace here means concordance between God's decree and man's will on what is right. The function of these 'goods' is to combine bodily 'goods' and the exterior goods with those of the soul. Indeed, without these the former two groups are of no use in producing the latter - the reason why 'goods' of grace are regarded as essential means to happiness. On guidance every one is dependent since without it no one can know the path to happiness. It has three grades. The first is general guidance which enables man to distinguish between good and bad. It is called general because it is given to all people: to some (baʿdahum, baʿdī-rā) through reason and to others through prophets and the books revealed to them.<sup>3</sup> Despite this guidance

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1. Ibid, III, 246, IV, 90-91, 202; cf. Dharīʿa, pp.35, 38-39; Aristotle, Ethics, p.8.

2. For the English translation of these terms see Lane, Lexicon, I (3), 1089, I(8) 3057, I(1) 136; van den Bergh, "Sources", p.96.

3. I.D., III, 93-94; K.S., p.690. This view that some people know through reason and others through revelation agrees with Ispahānī in his Dharīʿa, p.44, but contradicts al-Ghazālī's general position that the sources of knowledge of good and evil are both reason and revelation.

people sometimes do not do good because the desire for worldly pleasure is dominant in them. The second is especial guidance given to those who are practising mortification in accordance with the general guidance; to such people the path of wisdom (rāh-i-hikmat) is gradually opened. The most especial guidance is given to the prophets and also to the saints and sufis who have completed their mortification. Thus one 'good' of grace, guidance in its three forms, is concerned with one half of the soul's 'goods', namely, knowledge. The other three 'goods' of grace have to do with the other half - action.

While through guidance man knows good and evil, direction is a divine providence (al-ʿināyat al-ilāhiyya) for which an urge or will to proceed towards the good is produced in the mind. Those who have not been given direction cannot proceed to the good although they know it as such. Divine leading is a grace by which the limbs move towards the good in such a way that the man reaches it easily and in a short time. Thus the result of guidance is knowledge of good and evil; that of direction is will or inner urge for proceeding towards the good; that of leading is power (qudra) and movements of the limbs to reach the goal in a short time. Divine strengthening is an aid from the unseen world by which the inward insight of the good becomes clear and the outward power of grasping with the hands, etc. and of movement with the organs is increased. Similar to this aid is divine protection (ʿisma) which is an aid to prevent man from evil and whose source is also unknown.<sup>1</sup>

Then, divine grace is associated with both knowledge and

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1. Ibid.



action which are the nearest means to happiness. The question now arises as to whether there is any means of obtaining divine grace. It is clear from the above that there is no means of securing the first form of guidance. The method of the other forms of guidance is purification of the soul. Since devotional acts, among other things, effect purification,<sup>1</sup> they may be said to be a means of only these forms of guidance. Divine direction, etc. have no direct or indirect causes; these are bestowed upon those whom God wills - a view consistent with the Qur'ānic verse, "That is the free gift of God; He gives it to whom He wills". Their results are will, power, etc. for good actions and there are explicit statements in al-Ghazālī's works that this will, etc. are given to some people as free gifts (fatāyā), as something for which they did nothing, and that God gives - and He gives with justice - to other people will, etc. for evil although they did not commit any crime for which they are given these and are deprived of will, etc. for good actions. Especial favour to a man is "without any preceding desert (istihqāq)", "without any means of it" and deprivation of another is without any previous crime".<sup>3</sup> A passage from the Kīmīyā<sup>2</sup> on this view runs thus:

"Your act is by your power; rather your act is impossible without power, will and knowledge. So the key of your act is these three and all these three are free gifts of God most high ... Then be astonished at His bounty, for He gave you the key of the treasure of the act of obedience (tā'at) and deprived all the wicked of it. (He gave) the key of disobedience (ma'siyat) to others' hands and closed to them the door of the treasures of acts of obedience, without any crime of theirs; rather with His justice He did this. (He favoured you) without any service from you; rather he did this of His bounty. This will never be (a matter

1. See infra, pp. 250-53.

2. K.S., p. 621.

3. A.D., p. 159; K.S., p. 520.

of) conceit to one who knows the reality of divine unity (tawhīd)".<sup>1</sup>

It is wrong to suppose that devotional acts ('ibādāt) are the indirect means of these goods of grace. The reason is that these forms of grace are prior to the acts (for, as shown above, it is these goods from which proceed will, etc. for the acts) so that they are means of acts and not vice versa. Indeed a devotional act is said by al-Ghazālī himself to be dependent upon grace.<sup>2</sup> In the above passage too will, etc. for good acts are asserted to be created without any prior devotional act. It is the layman, and not al-Ghazālī, who believes that the function of devotional acts is to please God and thereby to draw forth His assistance. In al-Ghazālī's view their function is to purify the soul and beautify it so that love of God and the hereafter may be produced in it and love of this world may be removed. This point will be elaborated later. Since good acts are only performed through the 'goods' of grace they cannot be the means of the latter. That 'goods' of grace are bestowed without any means is also suggested by their genesis: Aristotle was the first man to have spoken of goods of fortune as an element of happiness; he, however, did not relate them to any divine being. Miskawayh followed him almost in toto. Ispahānī accepted their view that goods of fortune are also means of happiness and linked it with the Islamic idea by calling them "the 'goods' of divine grace" and describing them as four forms of God's aid to man mentioned in the Qur'ān. Al-Ghazālī accepts most of his ideas, elaborates them

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1. K.S., p. 621.

2. <sup>Ibid</sup> K.S., p. 620.

and makes them more Islamic and sufistic.<sup>1</sup> Now neither Aristotle, nor Miskawayh nor Ispahānī believed that this group of 'goods' had any means. It suggests that al-Ghazālī also has the same belief. This suggestion is confirmed by his explicit statements that will, etc. for good actions, which result from the 'goods' of grace are free gifts and that devotional acts are prescribed for the improvement of the soul and not for pleasing God and thereby for drawing grace from Him.

By including goods of grace in the means of happiness al-Ghazālī points to the Islamic idea that otherworldly happiness is partially a mercy of God. The same was also the view of Ispahānī which he made explicit by quoting the relevant Qur'ānic verses and prophetic traditions.<sup>2</sup> He declared that no one was independent of grace in any condition, that happiness was not attainable without the 'goods' of the soul and that there was no way of achieving these without God's grace.<sup>3</sup> Al-Ghazālī says almost the same: the primary means of happiness are the 'goods' of the soul and man can only acquire them with the help of bodily 'goods' and external goods should<sup>be</sup> given the 'goods' of grace. He will acquire them through effort and action, i.e. through constant practice and habituation and also through association with the virtuous - two methods to be described later - but the element of divine grace will be mingled with these. 'Goods' of grace are neither opposed

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1. Clearly, al-Ghazālī's conception of 'goods' of grace as a means of happiness has its source in philosophy; it is, however, developed by him and by Ispahānī in such a way that it has become a religious concept. Van den Bergh's statement ("Sources", p. 96), "The fourth category (i.e. the 'goods' of grace) is of course, wholly beyond the scope of stoicism" does not mean that it is not philosophic (in its origin); he means only that this category is absent in stoic philosophy.

2. Dhārī'ā, p. 35.

3. Ibid, pp. 44, 38, 35.

to the 'goods' of the soul in which all virtues are included nor independent of them, but are complementary to them; they help the acquisition of 'goods' of the soul through effort and habituation. True, however, while explaining habituation and association as the methods of acquiring virtues al-Ghazālī does not mention divine grace; but he does mention it while explaining training in individual virtues and good acts. Since the means nearest to happiness are knowledge and action it is necessary to explain their meaning and the effect they produce in the soul.

Knowledge and Action as the Two Primary Means to Happiness.

Since the 'goods' of the soul are, according to al-Ghazālī, the primary means to happiness and since these are reducible to knowledge (ʿilm) and action (ʿamal) these constitute the primary requirements of happiness. Without knowledge and action happiness cannot be attained. This view is maintained by al-Ghazālī throughout his whole life: it is set forth in his works composed both before<sup>1</sup> and after<sup>2</sup> his conversion to sūfism. Since this opinion is found in the Iljām, a work completed a few days before his death, it is plain that he retains it until his death. It cannot, therefore, be said that this view was held by him under the influence of philosophy before his conversion and rejected after it. The philosophers, he complains, did not emphasize action; they believe that knowledge alone is the means to their salvation and that action is not needed; he calls them deluded in this belief.<sup>3</sup> He also criticizes a class of religious scholars who

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1. M.ʿI., p. 295; M.ʿA., p. 3.      3. A.W., p. 54.

2. I.D., IV, 309; K.S., pp. 631, 632, 268, 70; A.D., pp. 2, 293, M.D., p. 34; B.H., pp. 88, 113; A.W., p. 58; J.Q., p. 117; I.ʿA., p. 45.

are busy acquiring knowledge but fall short of action and do not avoid sins; they think that in knowledge they have reached a stage when they will not be punished for neglecting action. The need for knowledge and action al-Ghazālī thinks to be a fundamental teaching of the Qur'ān for both are mentioned in most of the verses containing references to Paradise; in a few of such verses only knowledge or 'faith' is mentioned, but he says that action also is implicit in them. In the Jawāhir<sup>1</sup> he classifies Qur'ānic verses into those concerned with knowledge and those concerning action. He believes that by means of knowledge and action man ascends from the rank of lower animals to that of those who behold the beauty of God's glorious face.<sup>2</sup>

The meaning of knowledge and action is clear in al-Ghazālī's ethics. The ordinary man in the Islamic community understands by actions only the specific devotional acts prescribed by the Sharī'a. In the Qur'ān and Tradition action means any kind of good deed whether related to man's outward (zāhir) or inward (bātin) self; the latter, however, is less elaborately described because all people cannot accomplish it; the former is regarded as very comprehensive since it includes the devotional acts as well as all the good deeds done in different walks of life - domestic, social and political. Muslim jurists (fuqahā') emphasize the acts of the outward self in all the walks of life with total disregard of the inward. The sufis equally emphasize both kinds of action with the only exception of that concerned with politics; they elaborate the action of the inward self/briefly treated in the Sharī'a and give it the shape of a compact theory

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1. pp. 6, 52.

2. A.D., p. 293.



linking it with their conception of otherworldly happiness. The word action in al-Ghazālī's sufi ethics, therefore, has a very wide connotation: it includes actions of the outward self (al-a'māl az-zāhira) and actions of the inward self (al-a'māl al-bātina). Each of them has two sub-divisions. The two divisions of the former are devotional acts ('ibādāt) exclusively directed towards God and the good acts to be performed in one's life in the family and society but not in politics for politics is outside the domain of al-Ghazālī's ethics. The two sub-divisions of the latter are the action of purifying the soul (tazkiyat al-qalb) from evil character-traits and the action of beautifying (tahallī) it with good qualities. These four kinds of actions form the whole of the practical aspect of al-Ghazālī's ethics<sup>1</sup> and these will be treated separately in the present study.

Each kind of action is sometimes described by al-Ghazālī in terms of grades whose number at times rises even up to five but is reducible to two, lower and higher. The lower grade of teachings is intended for the lower category of the virtuous who will attain the lower grade of happiness. The higher grade is meant for the few who will achieve the higher grade of happiness. A great difference exists between the two grades of actions and between their motives: sometimes good actions of the lower class of the virtuous are evil actions for the few (hasanāt al-abrār sayyi'āt al-muqarrebīn). The former group's motive is the attainment of the sensual pleasures of Paradise and that of the latter is the vision of the Lord of Paradise. This division of good people by al-Ghazālī is in line with that of his sufi predecessors.

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1. A.D., p.6. Sometimes, however, the term action is used in a restricted sense of devotional act ('ibāda) only; see I.D., II, 144.

Inspired by Qur'ānic teaching they made this distinction which began from as early as the time of a<sup>4</sup>-Sarrāj who categorized mankind into the worldlings, the religious and the elect.<sup>1</sup>

As for knowledge it is knowledge of God and knowledge of the path to Him. The former concerns the divine essence, attributes and works.<sup>2</sup> This is 'knowledge of revelation' usually called the science of gnosis (ʿilm al-maʿrifa).<sup>3</sup> God's works include all existences save Him; some of them form the world of sense perception and others, e.g. angels, souls etc. the unseen world.<sup>4</sup> Knowledge of God, His attributes and His works is the highest form of knowledge. Below this in excellence is knowledge of the world to come. 'Knowledge of revelation' falls outside the domain of al-Ghazālī's ethics and hence its discussion is irrelevant to the present study. Knowledge of the path to God concerns all the four kinds of action mentioned above and is set forth in some of his works. Without this knowledge actions cannot properly be performed. Although knowledge of revelation and knowledge of the path are both necessary for happiness, the former is fundamental; it is sometimes called the seed of happiness in the hereafter or happiness itself. One type of this knowledge is faith (īmān) which is sufficient for happiness<sup>5</sup> and is included in al-Ghazālī's ethics. The valid faith is that of the people of truth and sunna (ahl al-haqq waʿs-sunna); the faith of any other sect is heretical. Matters of faith are God's unity, sanctification, power, knowledge, will, hearing and seeing, speech and works. Faith in

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1. Hujwiri, Kashf, p. 341.

2. J.Q., p. 5.

3. I.D., III, 334-35, IV, 258-59.

4. Ibid, pp.11-12.

5. Ibid, IV, 343.

divine unity is incomplete without the belief that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the last prophet sent to mankind and to jinns and that all the previous religions are nullified by him. Faith must also include belief in the Last Day and all that will happen on it as described in the Qur'ān and Tradition.<sup>1</sup> These beliefs form the basis of action. They also remain in the soul after man's death and will bring him happiness.

As there are grades in actions so too are there grades in faith. The lowest grade of faith is that which common men acquire from their parents, teachers and others without knowing any proof. This faith is of the lowest grade because it is usually mingled with minor errors which occur in its transmission. If the errors are in ~~the~~<sup>such</sup> fundamentals as God's oneness and Muhammad's prophethood the faith is completely wrong. The articles of faith are set forth in all al-Ghazālī's works dealing with his complete system of ethics. A higher grade of faith is that which is combined with knowledge of its simple proofs given in ar-Risālat al-Qudsiyya which is included in the Ihyā' as a chapter of its 'Book of Articles of Faith'. This grade of faith is stronger. At the highest grade of faith one knows its secret reality and complex proofs with deeper investigation, subtle questions and difficulties. These are discussed in al-Iqtisād fī'l-I'tiqād. This grade of faith is the strongest. The lowest grade ensures the lower grade of happiness and the two higher

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1. Ibid, I, 43, 81.

grades are required for the higher grade of happiness.<sup>1</sup>

The concept of knowledge and action as the primary means to happiness is linked with the concept of man's perfection (kamāl) and of his provision (zād) for the next life. It is for knowledge and action that the soul is brought to the world of body<sup>2</sup> and it is their highest grade which forms its perfection ensuring the higher happiness.<sup>3</sup> This is the logical consequence of al-Ghazālī's views on the nature of the soul as immortal and as having an especial characteristic. Man's differentia or the especial quality by which he is distinguished from the rest of creation lies in his capacity to know the realities of affairs; acquisition of knowledge, therefore, is the purpose of his creation; it is what makes him a human being and its neglect degrades him to the rank of the lower animals. Since the most excellent of all forms of knowledge is the knowledge of God, this must be regarded as man's perfection and provision for his future life.<sup>4</sup> Because the view that acquiring knowledge is the purpose of creation appears to contradict the Qur'ānic verse, "I only created the jinns and mankind that they might serve Me", al-Ghazālī, like Hujwiri,<sup>5</sup> explains the verse saying that knowledge also is included in it for service of God is impossible without knowing Him. In thus determining perfection by considering man's differentia al-Ghazālī

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1. A.D., pp.23-25. In the I.I., al-Ghazālī gives the gist of the science of mutakallimūn. He is satisfied with his exposition so that he regards it as deeper in investigation and nearer to knocking at the door of gnosis (ma'rifa) than the traditional kalām described in the works of mutakallimūn; see A.D., p.24. Jabre wrongly asserts (Certitude, p.88) that al-Ghazālī in this work "finds himself the prisoner of a terminology and of a complex of ideas which do not satisfy him".

2. I.D., III, 54.

3. Ibid, p. 311.

4. Ibid, pp.7-8; IV, 261.

5. Kashf, p.267.

is following the philosophic tradition. But, unlike the philosophers, he asserts that knowledge alone is not perfection in its entirety; action by which character is corrected and love of God is produced in the soul is also a part of perfection. It is true, however, that in some passages<sup>1</sup> knowledge alone is called perfection and 'provision'; this is because in these passages perfection and provision are determined by considering the soul's especial attribute and this attribute is knowledge.

The other method of determining 'provision' and perfection is by considering the eternal nature of the soul. Al-Ghazālī argues that since the soul is eternal and its permanent abode is the hereafter, that which will be useful to it there is to be reckoned as its 'provision' and the highest degree of that as its perfection. This concept of usefulness in the life to come is stressed more than that of man's differentia. This is evident from the fact that in the section entitled 'Real Perfection and Imaginary Perfection' knowledge is declared to be perfection only by making use of the former concept although in other places its being perfection is decided by the latter. Moreover, it is by applying the concept of usefulness in the hereafter that wealth, influence etc. are declared as false perfection. Emphasis upon this concept is laid in all al-Ghazālī's works dealing with perfection. Usefulness in the next life is also set forth as the criterion of goodness and value.<sup>2</sup>

By applying this concept al-Ghazālī shows that knowledge constitutes provision for the hereafter. He discusses this in

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1. I.D., III, 7-8, 2.

2. N.M., p.3; B.H., p.113; A.D., p.137; I.D., III, 244-46.



detail and concludes that knowledge of eternal entities (azaliyyāt) such as God, His attribute and His wisdom in His works and in the ordering of this world and the next is the real perfection for it remains perfect in the soul and will be useful in the future life in various ways. The same is also true of 'faith'.<sup>1</sup> By means of the concept of usefulness al-Ghazālī also shows that freedom from being enslaved to carnal desires (hurriyya) is also perfection for this is not affected by death. To call this freedom perfection is the same as calling action perfection for all the four kinds of action mentioned above concern this freedom; indeed this concern is sometimes made explicit by referring action to freedom.<sup>2</sup>

(There is however a place where repression of desire is said to concern only one kind of action, namely, purification from vices; this is the restricted function of repression). By the persistence of freedom i.e. action in the soul al-Ghazālī means their everlasting effect in it i.e. the qualities produced in it. This is why the existence of knowledge and action in the soul is sometimes described as the existence of three qualities. The first is purity of the soul from vices. This is the effect of the action of purification. The second is intimacy with God produced from continuous remembrance of Him. This is the effect of devotional acts. The third is love of God. Its theoretical cause is knowledge of Him and its practical cause is the action of beautifying the soul with good character-traits. These three qualities of the soul are those which cause happiness (mus'īdāt) in the life to come.<sup>3</sup>

Thus knowledge and good action are man's provision and

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1. Ibid, . 2. I.D., III, 311. 3. Ibid, pp.190-91.

perfection for it is these two which exist in the soul eternally. These are the good things mentioned in the Qur'ānic verse, "...and the ever-abiding, the good works, are better with your Lord in reward and better in expectation." All except knowledge (including 'faith') and action is left behind at death and must therefore be regarded as false perfection.<sup>1</sup> Faith and action, as already stated, have two grades, lower and higher. Any/one of these grades forms provision for the next life. Perfection, however, only refers to their higher grade which will cause higher happiness. To seek perfection is not required (wājib) of every individual; only the few can seek it. Seeking the lower grade is required of the majority of people. Their inability to ascend to the higher grade is the predestined will of God, for should all aspire after perfection and the world-order would be paralysed in which case perfection itself would vanish.<sup>2</sup> This idea is also found in al-Makkī's ethics;<sup>3</sup> he however did not apply it to the whole of his system.

Perfection is the same as nearness (qurb) to God and resemblance to the angels.<sup>4</sup> This nearness is qualitative and not spatial and is attainable in this life. There is, however, another meaning of nearness in al-Ghazālī: that which is attainable in the hereafter and which consists in closeness to God in Paradise gazing upon His glorious face forevermore.<sup>5</sup> Nearness is attainable in this life by acquiring the attributes of God and the angels. Since knowledge is one of their attributes by acquiring

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1. Ibid, 190, 311, 245-46; A.D., p.137; B.H., p.113; N.M., p.3.

2. I.D., III, 197.

3. Qūt, I, 516

4. I.D., III, 244-45; A.D., p.138. 5. I.D., III, 245-56.

its highest form, which is knowledge of God, man draws near to Him and is included in the group of angels nearest to Him. Freedom from carnal desires is another attribute of God and the angels; this freedom in its complete form is impossible for man to attain, but by controlling these desires he can resemble God and the angels and be far from resembling the lower animals.<sup>1</sup> This freedom is in a sense identical with good action for by this control man can cling to the right path. By employing all his powers and organs in knowledge and action man resembles the angels.<sup>2</sup> Thus by the higher degree of knowledge and action nearness to God is achieved.<sup>3</sup> This nearness is regarded by al-Ghazālī as the goal of the sūfī path.<sup>4</sup> It is identical with reaching God (wāṣūl). By reaching he does not mean identification with God (ittisāl) or entrance into Him (hulūl) or the mingling of human nature (nāsūt) with divine nature (lāhūt) as the Christians believe; all these are erroneous views.<sup>5</sup> The truth is that one who attains to God approaches Him in quality.

The concept of knowledge and action as the primary means to happiness is also linked with that of the love of God since the latter is produced by the former.<sup>6</sup> The way the love of God is produced by them is mentioned by al-Ghazālī. He says that God possesses such qualities that one who knows Him cannot but love Him; love necessarily follows from knowledge<sup>7</sup> provided love of the world is not strong in the soul. The strength of love depends

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1. Ibid, pp.244-45, IV, 374; A.D., p.44. 2. I.D., III, 7-8.

3. Ibid, II, 144.

4. M.D., pp.60-61.

5. I.D., III, 350; IV, 263.

6. Ibid, IV, 145.

7. Ibid, 272, 273, 54, III, 190-91.

upon the strength of knowledge, the weakness of love of the world and the degree of intimacy with God produced from remembrance of Him.<sup>1</sup> Love of the lower class of the virtuous is weak because of weakness in their knowledge of God. They know Him as benefactor and love Him for His benefits like an 'evil slave' and hence their love increases and decreases according to the benefits they receive. The higher class of the virtuous apprehend God's majesty, perfection and beauty and love Him for these as do the angels. They are perfect. This view agrees with that of al-Junayd. Difference between the two classes of people in faith also causes difference in love.<sup>2</sup>

Action in its four forms results in love in the following way. The evil qualities of the soul are but its various aspects of its love of the world; so purification clears the soul from this love and thus makes it fit for the love of God.<sup>3</sup> As a result/<sup>of</sup> beautification with good qualities the soul is inclined towards God and is removed from the world. Continuity in devotional acts is in effect continuity in remembrance of God and reflection on Him from which results strengthening of 'faith' and intimacy with and love of God and also indifference to the world.<sup>4</sup> Since there are two grades of action there are two grades of love. Difference in love will cause difference in happiness in the life to come.<sup>5</sup>

Love of God and the Prophet, al-Ghazālī says, is emphasized in the Qur'ān and Tradition. The ṣūfīs from al-Ḥasan's time were stressing this teaching of the Shari'ah. Muslim philosophers spoke

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1. Ibid, 145, 248-59, 272, 273.      2. Ibid, IV, 274-75.

3. Ibid, 19-20, III, 190-91.

4. Ibid, IV, 151, III, 190-91.

5. Ibid, IV, 274-75.

of love of God but did not emphasize it; influenced by Greek thought they called perfection in knowledge the ideal of life. Some theologians even denied the possibility of love of God and interpreted the Sharī'a's teaching on this subject as meaning obedience to God. Al-Ghazālī refutes them more successfully than al-Makkī did and, like his sūfī predecessors, declares the love of God to be the ideal of life.<sup>1</sup> He urges men not to die without loving God for it is to Him that everyone goes back after death and the more beloved he makes Him in this life the greater will be his joy in the next in meeting Him.<sup>2</sup> The soul is created to acquire the love of God.<sup>3</sup> The more an act promotes this love the greater is its moral worth. To love God more than any other is enough, but perfect love is very intense and is called passionate love ('ishq) i.e. the extreme love. This is equivalent to the highest perfection and to nearness to God. At this highest stage of love visions and mystic intuitions occur. Intense love, the ideal of the sūfis, was possessed by the Prophet before he received prophethood so that, seeing him mostly alone in worship in the cave of Hira, the beduins used to say - Muḥammad passionately loved his Lord.<sup>4</sup> By knowledge and action man acquires passionate love by which he ascends to the rank of the passionate lovers among the angels who have always been engaged in studying the beauty of God's face glorifying Him and sanctifying Him.<sup>5</sup>

When such a relationship between man and God develops he experiences the state of annihilation (fana') and hence this state

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1. Ibid, 252, 156. 2. Ibid, 145; A.D., p.284. 3. I.D., p.54.

4. Ibid, II, 247; M.D., p.62; Arberry, Sufism, pp.37, 42, 45.

5. A.D., pp.293.



is also called by al-Ghazālī the goal of the mystic path.<sup>1</sup> The gist of his concept of annihilation is that at this stage a lover of God is sometimes so much engrossed in the contemplation of his beloved that he forgets everything except Him; he is even unconscious of himself and his own conditions; "I mean that he forgets them ... and I do not mean by his annihilation the annihilation of his body but the annihilation of his mind."<sup>2</sup> Annihilation of the mind is the cessation of its awareness of all else but God; so everything else is nothing (nistī, fanā') for him; since God alone is subsistent (bāqī) in his awareness he says, 'All are God'; this is divine unity (tawhīd). Thus the highest stage is called annihilation or nothingness when it is related to existences other than God, and oneness when related to God.<sup>3</sup> This state al-Ghazālī says as Hujwiri does,<sup>4</sup> passes away like a flash of lightning; it does not persist because man cannot tolerate it; visions and mystical intuitions occur in this state. It is expressed by such phrases as complete annihilation (fanā' kullī) and annihilation in divine unity (fanā' fī at-tawhīd). This does not mean 'entrance', 'mingling', 'identification', 'incarnation', etc.; all these are wrong.<sup>5</sup> There is no pantheism in al-Ghazālī. God is other than His creature and must remain so. Annihilation does not mean loss of identity; rather identity is perfected by it. Subsistence does not indicate subsistence of God in man.

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1. M.D., pp.60-61; K.S., pp.382, 640. 2. I.D., II, 256, 257.

3. K.S., pp.382-83.

4. Kashf, pp.226-27.

5. K.S., p.383; I.D., II, 257. In many of his works al-Ghazālī exposes the errors in these views. The same has also been done by Hujwiri in his Kashf pp.37, 243, 244, 254. For pantheism cf. Upper, "Nature", pp.28-30, 31, 32.

Nature of Character

The problem of good character (ḥusn al-khuluq) is a central tonic of moral philosophy. Proper appreciation of this problem and many others related to it depends on an understanding of what character itself is. Some of the moralists who preceded al-Ghazālī realised this dependence and accordingly in their ethical works dealt elaborately with the real nature (ḥaqīqa) of character and the possibility or otherwise of change in it; others either did not discuss these problems at all or discussed them in a manner not satisfactory. Aristotle treated the problem of character but his treatment is not considered to be satisfactory.<sup>1</sup> In Plato's dialogues no explicit theory of character is to be found. Hellenistic philosophers, however, were convinced that Plato had built up a close and complete philosophical system and had been aware of every problem touched on by later Greek philosophers. They expected him to have answered questions which had not existed for him and succeeded in discovering passages in the dialogues to provide the necessary answers. They deduced a theory of character (as they did some other theories) from numerous passages of the dialogues and this was done from the first century B.C. and taken over by later Platonizing moralists like Galen (d.199 A.D.). Galen presented a coherent theory of character in the four books of his De Moribus. The first book of this work deals with the nature of character and the problem of the change in it. The Stoic philosophers also took some interest in these problems.<sup>2</sup> Among the Muslim philosophers who flourished before al-Ghazālī, Isḥāq al-Iskawayh was perhaps the only thinker to discuss these subjects fairly elaborately. He mentioned the Greek philosophers' views on them and set forth his own opinion in the form of a syllogism.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, among al-Ghazālī's predecessors from the ṡūfīs ar-Rāghib al-

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1. Walzer, "New Light on Galen's Moral Philosophy", GA, XLIII (1949) included in his Greek, p. 146. 2. Ibid, pp. 143-145, 150.

3. Tahdhib, pp.31-34.

Ispahānī was the only man to take <sup>an</sup> interest in these problems. In his Ḥarīʿa he tried to explain the differences among such words as character (khuluq), habit (ʿāda), nature (ṭabʿ) and natural disposition (sajjiyya) and also to reconcile two opposing views on the question of change in character.<sup>1</sup> Al-Ghazālī complains that ʿAlī ibn-abū-Tālib, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Ḥabl at-Tustarī, ʿAsitī, Shāh al-Irṣānī, abū-ʿUthmān, Ḥusayn ibn-Manṣūr, abū-Saʿīd al-Ḥarrāj and others talked about the nature of good character, but what in reality they spoke of was the result of good character and not the nature of good character or the nature of character itself.<sup>2</sup> So he proceeds to discuss at length what is meant by character before explaining what he understands by good character.

Al-Ghazālī defines character as "an established (rāsikha) state in the soul (ḥayʿa fi n-nafs) from which actions proceed easily (bi saḥūla wa yusr), without any need of reflection (fikr) and deliberation (rawiʿya)".<sup>3</sup> If this state is such that praiseworthy actions proceed from it, it is called good character; if blameworthy actions arise from it, it is termed ~~as~~ evil character. Character, then, does not refer to one's external behaviour; it is something internal; it is a state of the soul. But any state of the soul cannot be called character; a state, in order to be character, must be established and settled in the soul. A transient condition of the soul cannot be called character, because a person who gives wealth to the poor occasionally or for some accidental cause is not said to possess the character trait of generosity (khuluq as-sakhāʿ); he is said to possess it if the quality of giving wealth has become a relatively permanent disposition of his soul as a result of his constant practice of it in various situations.<sup>4</sup> This aspect of relative permanence was also emphasized in Miskawayh's definition of character. It is true that he did not qualify the phrase "state" of the soul" (ḥāl an-nafs) with the word rāsikha as al-Ghazālī

1. Ḥarīʿa, pp.28-30.

2. I.D., III, 46; I.S., pp.23-29.

3. I.D., III, 46; cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, p.31; Nasir ad-Dīn Rūsī, Ikhlāq-i-Nāsirī, Lahore, 1923, p.60; Jalāl ad-Dīn Dawwānī, Ikhlāq-i-Jalālī, Lahore, 1923, p.41.

4. Ibid. 5. Tahdhīb, p.31.

does, but from his explanation<sup>5</sup> of the term "state" it is clear that he meant by it a state that becomes stable by habit and self-discipline; instead of using the word hāl he sometimes used words like hayya,<sup>1</sup> sajjiyya,<sup>2</sup> and malaka<sup>3</sup> - terms which have in them some sense of permanence. This aspect of permanence has also been emphasized in later times by at-Ṭūsī and ad-Dawwānī. In their definitions they have preferred the use of the phrase malaka fi n-nafs to Miskawayh's phrase hāl an-nafs, because the word malaka means a hayya (state) of the soul which has a tendency to persist, whereas hāl stands for a condition of the soul that is easy to change. An established state of the soul to which the term character refers should, al-Ghazālī says, be such that actions proceed from it easily and spontaneously. Actions arising from it are spontaneous reactions to environmental situations: The act of generosity, for instance, is the spontaneous outflow of sympathy from the mind of a benevolent person; it is an inner urge that manifests itself automatically in a relevant situation; it needs no constraining consciousness of duty nor any mathematical calculation of consequences. If actions proceed from a state of the soul, not easily, but with difficulty and after reflection and deliberation, the state cannot be character, for a man who experiences difficulty in spending money in good causes is not regarded as one possessing the character trait of generosity; one who feels difficulty in keeping silent when angry is not called clement.<sup>4</sup> The condition that actions must proceed easily has also been mentioned in the definitions of character given by Miskawayh, at-Ṭūsī and ad-Dawwānī.

As to the reason why character should refer to a state of the soul and not to outward action or to any other thing, al-Ghazālī states that should one wish to determine what character really is, four possible meanings of it come to the mind.<sup>5</sup> They are (1) action (fi'l), good and bad, (2) power (qudra) for doing

1. as-Ja'āda, Egypt, 1928, p.46; Al-Hawānīl wa Sh-Shawānīl, ed. Ahmad Amin and Sayyid Ahmad Naggar, Cairo, 1951, p.66.

2. Ja'āda, p.44. 3. Madhib, p.31; Hawānīl, p.36.

4. I.I., III, 46; cf. Aristotle, ethics, pp.43-43. 5. Ibid 46-47; cf. ibid.



what is good and what is evil, (3) knowledge (ma'rifa) of good and evil, and (4) a state (hay'a) of the soul which makes one inclined to good or to evil and by which one's doing it becomes easy and interesting. Now action cannot be character; it is identical with conduct or what is called behaviour in modern psychology; it is the outward expression of character and not character itself. A man who spends money for a good cause, when he has money, is regarded by all to have a generous character even when he becomes unable to spend money either because he has no money now or because of some other obstacle. If action is the same as character, he cannot be called generous for the reason that he is not performing the act of giving money, whereas no one hesitates to call him generous; if a generous man fails to do a generous deed in a particular situation, no one says that he has thereby become miserly. Again, a person who has the character-trait of miserliness sometimes spends money in order to make a show or to fulfil some other motive. If action is character, he should be called generous when he is spending money for these reasons, whereas no one calls him a generous man. From these two cases it is clear that action itself is not character. Nor can character be the same as the power for performing good and bad actions, because the relation of this power to good and bad - two contradictory phenomena - is the same. One who has the power to do good has the power to do evil also, but one who possesses one character-trait cannot simultaneously possess the opposite of it. By nature all men possess the power of doing good and evil; power is innate, whereas character is acquired by effort and appropriate discipline. Character is either good or bad, whereas power is neither; power is amoral and not moral. Nor can character be identical with the knowledge of good and evil, for this is knowledge, like power, is related to good and bad in the same manner. The reasons for which power cannot be character are the reasons for which knowledge cannot be so. If neither action <sup>nor power</sup> nor knowledge is the same as character, what is left of the four possible meanings of it + i.e. a state of the soul - must be its true meaning. Character then is a state of the soul from which actions arise easily; if actions proceeding from it are praiseworthy to reason and to the Shari'a, character is to be considered



as good; if they are blameworthy, character should be reckoned as evil. Character is man's internal form (as-sūra al-bāṭina), while his external form (as-sūra al-zāhira) is what is constituted by his various organs.<sup>1</sup>

#### Can Character be Changed?

Al-Ghazali maintains that character can be changed by effort and appropriate discipline. In all his ethical works he lays stress upon the need for improving character, and in some of them he discusses in detail the ways in which a complete change in it can be effected. He believes that the main function of morality and religion lies in guiding people in such a manner that they may refine their character and be able to attain happiness in this world as well as in the next. Following Ispahānī, he argues that if character is regarded as something that is not subject to change, all commandments and admonitions, encouragement and threatening would be useless. The Prophet said, "Beautify your character"; if it really were not possible surely it would not have been commanded. Besides, all admit that change of disposition among animals is possible; a beast of prey is changed from wildness to domesticity; a dog is changed from a devourer to a being of good manner (ta'addub); a horse is changed from refractoriness to gentleness. Each one of these is a change in disposition. If change of character among animals is possible, the correction of man, with his predominance of reason, should obviously be easier and more possible.<sup>2</sup>

Some people deny that there can be any change in disposition. The arguments that they put forward rest, al-Ghazali says, upon their assumption that what is natural (tab'ī) cannot be changed by any means.<sup>3</sup> Their arguments are two in number which he reproduces and endeavours to refute. He, however, does not say who

1. Ibid; K.S., p.429.

2. I.D., III, 48; K.S., p.432; cf. Ispahānī, Ḥarīḡa, p.29; Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, pp.32,34; Hawāmīl, p. 119.

3. I.D., III, 48.

these deniers of change are. One of those who are in his mind might be Galen whose view Nislawayh discussed in his Tahdhīb. Galen believed that <sup>a</sup>few persons are good by nature and they later do not become bad; many are bad by nature and they later do not become good; some people are neither good nor bad by nature and they later become good or bad by moral education. He expressed this view after refuting the opinions of the Stoics and of some philosophers who preceded them. The Stoics maintained that all men are by nature good but are afterwards corrupted by bad surroundings and dominated by wicked passions which cannot be tamed by discipline. Some philosophers before the Stoics taught that men are by nature bad but they become good later; however, those among them who are extremely bad cannot be reformed.<sup>1</sup>

The first argument of those who have denied the possibility of change in character is that man has an external form constituted by his various organs, and an internal form which is the same as his character. The external form is incapable of change; one who is tall cannot be made short and vice versa; one who is ugly to look at cannot be made beautiful. The internal form is like the external form and is, therefore, incapable of change. They have referred to the saying, "God ceased from creation" (faragha Allāhu min al-khalq). Consequently they say that the desire for a change in character is equivalent to the desire for a change in what God has created. Their second argument is that if change in evil character be possible it has to be effected by completely suppressing man's appetites, anger and love for the world. But experience has shown that complete suppression of these is an impossibility so long as man is alive, for they are rooted in his nature and temperament (ḥizāj). To make efforts for bringing about a change in disposition, then, is only to waste time.<sup>2</sup>

To al-Ghazālī these two arguments are erroneous. All existences (mawjūdāt), he points out, are of two kinds. "The first kind includes that which has a created nature that requires no action on our part; as for example the heavens, the stars, the members of our bodies and their separate parts and so many things

1. Nislawayh, Tahdhīb, pp.32-33; cf. Salzer, "Aspects", pp.160-61

2. I.D., III, 48; K.S., p.429

that take place around us. The second kind includes what God has created with a capacity to take on perfection whenever it finds the proper condition for development. But in the process of this development there is an act of choice. In the case of the date-stone, it is neither an apple nor a date, but it does have the capacity to become a date. As a matter of experience, however, it becomes a date only when human choice is exercised. Now in their first argument, the deniers of change are, al-Ghazālī observes, right in saying that man's external form cannot be changed, for it certainly belongs to that kind of existences which are created perfect. But they are wrong in taking the internal form, character, to be analogous to the external form and thereby concluding that the former, like the latter, cannot be altered. The truth is that the internal form is included in that kind of existences which are created imperfect but are provided with the capacity to take on perfection whenever they find the proper condition for development. Every individual is created with certain potentialities some of which are manifested even in the early years of his childhood, but these are not his character or settled ways of his behaviour. They are raw materials, so to say, and not finished products; they are potentialities and not actualities. They can be developed, moulded and cast into set or definite patterns by subsequent education and habituation. But these cannot be changed into completely other traits, however much effort may be made to do so, as a date stone may be developed into a date but never into an apple. Character, then, is susceptible to change in the sense that capacities created by God can be realised and developed and not that they can be made into other dispositions by effort and discipline.<sup>1</sup>

In their second argument, the deniers of change have, al-Ghazālī says, rightly held that the appetites, etc., are natural to man and are quite incapable of complete suppression,

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1. I.D., III; 48; E.S., p. 432; cf. Isbahānī, Dharrīʿa, pp. 29-30; Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, pp. 1; Aristotle, Ethics, pp. 41-42.

but they made a mistake in maintaining that the change in character necessitates uprooting them completely.<sup>1</sup> The fact is that change demands not their complete uprooting, but their subjection to the extent of moderation (i'tidāl) and the taming of these by earnest effort and discipline, and men are able to accomplish this. It is to this task that men are commanded and it is this that has come to be a condition of their happiness. The appetites and anger are necessary for man's survival and this is why they are created in him. So their complete suppression can never be necessary in the modification of character. How can their total annihilation be necessary when they were present in prophets who were men of the highest form of character? While describing the believers' attributes God said in the Qur'ān, "Those who restrain their anger" and not "Those who lack anger"; if the uprooting of anger were needed God would have said, "Those who lack anger". All these prove that the total suppression of man's lower nature is not necessary. What is needed is to suppress it to the state of moderation. That to subdue it to this state is possible is evident from experience and observation.<sup>2</sup>

Although all men are capable of changing their character, everyone cannot do so in equal time and in equal measure. Some are rapid in accepting the change, while others are slow. This is a plain fact and this was admitted by all those who believe in the possibility of change in character, like Aristotle,<sup>3</sup> Iqbal<sup>4</sup> and Isfahānī.<sup>5</sup> Keeping in view people's differences in this regard, al-Shazālī, following Isfahānī in toto, has grouped mankind in four stages.<sup>6</sup> The first are headless people (al-insān al-shufl) who do not distinguish truth from falsehood or good from evil. They lack conviction as they were lacking it at their birth. Their appetites are not strengthened for they have not indulged in them. Thus the character of any one of this kind of men may become good in but a short time. "The men who are at the second stage are those who know well enough the baseness of what is base, but they do not become habituated in good conduct because they consider that their evil conduct is something enjoy-

1. I.D., III, 49; A.S., p. 432. 2. I.D. III, 449. 3. Iqbal, Is awayh, Pahdhīb, p. 33.  
4. Ibid, pp. 34-35. 5. Dharrī'a, p. 48. 6. I.D., pp. 442-43.



able. As a consequence they engage in it submissively, in accordance with their desires, but contrary to their better judgement. As a result the situation of those in this stage is much more difficult than that of those in the first stage, for they are more at fault... On the whole they may be said to be capable of exercising this discipline, but it requires strenuous effort. Those in the third stage actually approve of these dispositions, maintaining that they are necessary, right and beautiful. So they pursue them wholeheartedly. It is almost impossible for men in this third stage to be cured. In fact there is no hope for them, except in the rarest instances, for their opportunities for error are being constantly increased. The fourth kind are those who, along with what accompanies corrupt belief and practice, see also a sort of virtue in their very excess of evil and destruction of lives. In this they vie with one another, and they think they gain fame by the amount of evil they accomplish. It will be seen that they are the most difficult of the four stages, and it is of them that it has been said, 'It is a real torture for anyone to have to train a wolf to be well-bred, or to wash blackhair-cloth to make it white'.<sup>1</sup>

#### Good Character

As noted above, man has two forms - one is external and the other internal - and his character, according to al-Ghazālī, refers to the latter, or to an established state of the soul from which actions easily proceed. Each of these two forms may be in good or bad condition. The external form is considered to be completely good when all the organs of the body which constitute it are good (ḥasīn) and harmoniously developed. If some of them, for example the ears only, are good the external form is regarded good only in respect of the organ which is good. In exact / the same manner, the internal form of character cannot be completely good unless all the parts (arḥān) or faculties or powers (quwā) of the soul are good and sound (ṣāliḥ). If one or more, but not

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1. Ibid. cf. Ispahānī, Dharīʿa, pp.48



all, of these faculties be good, character will be said to be good only in respect of the appropriate faculty or faculties. To al-Shazālī, then goodness in character depends on one's inner faculties being good, sound, straight (istiwā') moderate (i'tidāl) and mutually harmonious (tanāsub).<sup>1</sup>

Man's inner faculties are, according to al-Shazālī, four, namely, the cognitive which is reason, the appetitive, the irascible and "the faculty of maintaining justice among these three faculties".<sup>2</sup> Each of these faculties may be in good or bad state. The cognitive faculty is in a sound state if it can easily distinguish between true and false in speeches (aqwāl), between right and wrong in belief (i'tiqād) and between good and evil in works (af'āl). From this state of this faculty wisdom (ḥikma) is achieved. The irascible faculty is in a sound condition if it obeys the dictates of reason and the sharī'a, if it expands or contracts according as they order it to do. From this state of this faculty the quality of courage (shī'a) is achieved. Likewise, the appetitive faculty is in a good condition if it yields to reason and the sharī'a. From this state of this faculty temperance (ḥifẓa) is achieved.<sup>3</sup> The faculty of justice is in a sound condition if it is able to control the faculties of anger and appetite according to the dictates of reason and the sharī'a; it is a power (qudra) which, like an officer, enforces ~~its~~ their orders on the other faculties. From this state of this faculty the virtue of justice (ʿadl) is achieved. Thus justice is the name of a faculty as well as of the virtue of that faculty.<sup>4</sup> No thinkers before al-Shazālī seem to have thought of it in this way; they regarded it not as a faculty but as a virtue of the entire soul, which comes about when all the three faculties function in moderation and in mutual harmony, surrendering themselves willingly to reason.<sup>5</sup> If all the four faculties, al-Shazālī/ says, are in a

1. I.D., III, 47; S.S., p. 429. 2. See supra, #147-53.  
3. I.D., III, 47; S.S., p. 429; cf. Isḥāq, ʿAḥdhib, p. 16; vice versa, ʿAḥdhib, pp. 153-55; ʿAḥdhib, p. 19; Isḥāq, sharī'a no. 27, 28. 4. I.D., III, 49; S.S., pp. 429-30.  
5. Isḥāq, ʿAḥdhib, p. 16; ʿAḥdhib, p. 153; ʿAḥdhib, p. 19. vice versa,

good and sound states, character is absolutely good; if all of them are in<sup>a</sup> bad condition, character is absolutely bad; if some of them function soundly character will be good in proportion to the faculties which function in a proper manner.

If a faculty of the soul is not in a sound state its working either exceeds the proper limit or falls short of it.<sup>2</sup> What is the proper limit? Each faculty, save that of justice, has, for al-Jhazālī, two extremes (atrāf) - one of excess (ifrāt) and the other of deficiency (tafrīt) - and a state between these two. This middle state is called the mean (al-wast). It is farthest removed from the two extremes; it is at equal distance from them both.<sup>3</sup> It is identical with moderation.<sup>4</sup> The mean is the proper state in which every faculty of the soul should remain. It is what is praiseworthy in character and necessary for all to observe, while the two extremes are blameworthy and should be avoided. The mean is virtue (al-fadila), while the two extremes are two vices (raḥīlatān).<sup>5</sup> Virtue occurs as a result of the sound functioning of the soul's faculty; its sound functioning consists in its working with the mean or moderation. So one can define virtue as that quality of the soul which disposes it to work on the mean. Mean is the essence of virtue; deviation from it to any one of the two extremes is the essence of vice. If the cognitive faculty surpasses the mean, i.e. it is used in fulfilling the wrong ends (al-aghrad al-fāsida), the vice of wickedness (akhubth) occurs; if it falls short of the mean, the vice of folly (bulha) is found; if it is on the mean the virtue of wisdom is achieved. If the irascible faculty crosses the mean over, the vice of rashness (tahawwur) is generated; if it falls short of the mean, the vice of cowardice (jubn) comes about; if it is at the state of the mean the virtue of courage occurs. If the appetitive faculty is at its excess it begets the vice of greed (sharsh); if it is deficient the vice of the

12. I.S., p.430; I.S., III, 47. 23. I.S., III, 55 line 4; cf. al-Jhazālī, Tahdhīb, p. 25. 34. Ibid, III, 47; cf. Kindī, al-Asās, I, 179. 45. I.S., III, 47 line 18; A.S., p.430; cf. al-Jhazālī, Tahdhīb, p.25; Avicenna, al-Shifāʾ, pp.153-159; al-Fārābī, p.19; Kindī, al-Asās, I, 178-179.

complete absence of appetite (jumūd) is found; if it is at the mean state the virtue of temperance is attained. The faculty of justice does not have two extremes; it has only one opposite which is oppression (jawr). Should this faculty fail to work soundly the vice of oppression occurs; should it function well the virtue of justice is achieved.<sup>1</sup> Thus justice is not a mean between two extremes. For Miskawayh, however, it was a mean between oppressing others (zulm) and being oppressed by others (inzilām).<sup>2</sup>

Then, good character results from the observance of the mean or moderation. But why should the mean be observed? Aristotle and Muslim philosophers found the prescribing authority of the mean in man's faculty of reason; to them the working of the soul keeping to the position of the mean and its functioning in accordance with the dictates of reason are the same thing; *the* mean is the quality of any action that is in accord with reason. Al-Ghazālī does not deny that reason prescribes the mean; but he relies for this theory mainly upon the Shari'ā. He states that in the Qur'ān and Traditions it is the mean which is recommended.<sup>3</sup> Those who observe it in spending money are praised in the verse, "And they, who when they spend are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and (keep) between these the just mean". In another verse God commanded men to be moderate in spending - "And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it forth to the utmost (limit) of its stretching forth". In the following verse men are prohibited to exceed the limit in satisfying their appetites for food; "And eat and drink and be not extravagant; surely He does not love the extravagant". In regard to anger God said the believers are "Firm of hearts against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves". The Prophet said, "Goodness of things is their mean". Men are thus commanded by the Shari'ā to create and maintain in themselves an attitude between two vicious

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1. Ibid, cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, pp.26-28; Kindi, Rasā'il, I, 178; Ispahānī, Dharī'ā, p.22.

2. Tahdhīb, p.28. 3. I.D., III, 49-50; A.S., p.431.

extremes. The idea of the mean is central in the teachings of the Qur'ān and Tradition.<sup>1</sup>

But why does the Shari'ah prescribe the mean in character? There is, al-Ghazālī replies, a secret and real reason (hurr wa taḥiīq) for this. The reason is that man's attainment of salvation in the next world is dependent upon his possessing the angelic attributes, for his substance is the same as that of the angels and the place of his origin is the angelic world; in this world of water and clay he is merely a stranger. During his temporary sojourn in this world his soul acquires some qualities which, on its going back to God, keep it from being one with the angels in respect of quality and deprive it of salvation. It is necessary, therefore, that it should go back to God with the angelic attributes and bear no attribute other than this. What is the angelic attribute? The angels have no attachment to anything of this world; they are deep in their love for God and concentrate on nothing other than God. If one goes back with a soul not free from attachment to the world, one will not be entitled to salvation, as God said, "...except him who came to God with heart free". This freedom from attachment is attained by observing the mean. To take an example, if a man is a miser he busies himself with not spending money; if he is extravagant he remains busy with spending it; in either case his soul is attached to money, a thing of this world, whereas what is demanded of him is that his soul should not be attached to it. So, the soul should be free from both the qualities - spending and not spending. But since this is a thing utterly impossible for it to realise in this world, it has to do what is the nearest and most resembling to it and the remotest from the two qualities. This is the mean. Observance of the mean in spending money is, in a sense, equivalent to complete freedom from both qualities - the way the water which is neither too hot nor too cold, but is between the two, is said to be free from both heat and cold. Then if man is on the mean in spending money his soul remains free from

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1. Cf. Fazlur Rahman, 'The Quranic Conception of God, the Universe and Man', Is, VI (1957), p.12.



attachment to money. If he follows the mean always and in all his affairs, his soul will be free from all the things of this world. Such a pure soul will be able to attain salvation. This is the reason why the Shari'a asked people to observe the mean.<sup>1</sup>

To observe the real mean (al-wast al-haqiqi), however, is not an easy task. The difficulty involved in it was recognised<sup>2</sup> by many of those who propounded this theory. Al-Ghazālī says that the real mean is extremely obscure (ghayab al-ghāib). It is one in every disposition and action, while deviation from it may take many forms which are different vices. The mean is, as it were, sharper than the edge of a sword and thinner than a hair. It is the same as the right path (al-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm) which should be followed by all. Without help from God none can follow it, and this is the reason why the Shari'a made it obligatory on every sane adult person to seek help from God for it seventeen times a day - once in each rak'a of the obligatory part of ritual prayer. So difficult it is to keep to the right path that even the Prophet himself was afraid of deviating from it. This fear of his found its expression in his assertion that the sūra Hūd caused his hair to grow white, for in this sūra he was commanded to be firm on the right way (al-ṣirāt) and not to exceed the limit. Those who follow the right path, the mean, will be able to cross the Bridge (al-ṣirāt) in the next world which is also sharper than the edge of a sword and thinner than a hair. It is because of their deviation from the mean that most people will fall from the Bridge into the gulf of Hell-fire; those who are believers amongst them will, however, be later delivered from Hell after they have suffered punishment in proportion to their deviation from the mean.<sup>3</sup>

Then, each faculty of the soul has its own virtue which appears if the faculty functions keep to the position of the mean. Wisdom is the virtue of the rational soul, courage of the spirited, temperance of the appetitive and justice of the justice.

1. I.D., III, 50, 55; E.S., p.437. 2. Miskawayh, Tahdhib, p.25; Aristotle, Ethics, pp.52,59. 3. I.D., III, 55; E.S., pp.430-31.



Wisdom is the highest of all virtues; God said in the Qur'an, "Whoever is granted wisdom he indeed is given a great good". These four virtues are, as it were, the four pillars of good character.<sup>1</sup> Following Isfahānī, al-Chazālī tries to show that the fact of their being what forms good character is hinted at in the Qur'an. Describing the believers' attributes God said, "The believers are only those who believe in God and His Apostle; then they doubt not and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of God; they are the truthful ones". Belief in God and His Apostle as mentioned here is a consequence of reason; this is the highest form of the virtue of wisdom. To fight in God's way with wealth is possible when the appetitive faculty is brought under the subjection of reason; so fighting with wealth as mentioned in this verse hints at the virtue of temperance. To fight in God's path with life is clearly the virtue of courage. Praising the Prophet and his companions God said, "Firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves". It is clear in this verse that for firmness is a place and for compassion also is a place; one should not be firm in all conditions nor should one be compassionate in all. This indicates the virtue of justice.<sup>2</sup>

These four virtues are conceived of as ~~very~~ comprehensive. They are considered to be the root (uṣūl) virtues from which stem a number of virtues which may be called minor or subordinate or secondary virtues. The relation between the minor and the major virtues is thought by al-Chazālī to be like the one between the root and the branches (furūʿ, shākh).<sup>3</sup> Minor virtues are the manifestations of major virtues. This same relation exists between the root vices which are the opposites of the root virtues and the minor vices which are the manifestations of the root vices in various situations. Miskawayh, however, conceived of the relation as the one between genus (ajnās) and species (anwāʿ).<sup>4</sup>

1. I.D., III, 47, 48; K.S., p. 431; cf. Rindī, Sharḥ II, I, 177-78; Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, pp. 16-17.

2. I.D., III, 48; cf. Isfahānī, Sharḥ I, p. 27.

3. Ibid; K.S., p. 431. 4. Tahdhīb, pp. 16-17, 18, 191-193.

is to, al-Ghazālī says, a life to itself in the form of the following virtues; good content which includes the management of oneself, one's family and one's society, acute intelligence (adh-dhihn), sagacious judgment, right conjecture, apprehending the subtleties of actions and the hidden evil qualities of the soul. From the vice of folly result vices like stupidity, insanity and little experience in affairs despite the soundness of the faculty of imagination. The difference between stupidity and insanity is that a stupid person's object of desire is right but his way of reaching it is wrong; in insanity the person desires to do what he should not do and so his desired object and his way of reaching it are both wrong. The manifestations of the vice of wickedness are deceit, deception and the like. Courage manifests itself in the form of the following virtues: liberty, self-reliance in the face of danger, chivalry in leading to a striving after higher ends, considering oneself insignificant, physical exertion for achieving moral ideals, forbearance, firmness in meeting fear-inspiring situations, restraining the anger, soberness and acquiring the love of equals or elders by pleasing manner and good action. From rashness follow vices like boasting, haughtiness, self-admiration, extravagance and arrogance. The manifestations of the vice of cowardice are despair, humiliation, grief, lowness, considering oneself mean and aversion from receiving obligatory right. The manifestations of temperance are the following virtues: generosity, modesty, patience, forgiveness, to be content with moderate amounts of necessary things, piety, mutual help and absence of greed. From the vices of greed and complete absence of desire proceed vices like covetousness, impudence, wickedness, prodigality, stinginess, hypocrisy, defamation, excessive boldness, uselessness, flattery, envy, rancour, rejoicing at others' misfortune, making oneself humble to the rich and

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hating the poor.<sup>1</sup> The manifestations of the virtue of justice and the vice of oppression have not been mentioned by al-Chazālī. A number of virtues have been mentioned under justice by Miskawayh and Avicenna.<sup>2</sup>

To sum up, perfectly good character depends on the good functioning of all the faculties of the soul. Good working of a faculty consists in its working with moderation or mean. What should be the right mean in a particular situation is to be ascertained by reason and the Sharī'a. In consequence of the functioning of the four faculties of the soul with moderation four virtues - wisdom, temperance, courage and justice - are achieved. Therefore, the essence of virtue is the mean, and the essence of vice is deviation from it. The four virtues and their opposites - eight vices - manifest themselves in various forms in various situations. The four virtues are the "roots (uṣūl) and mothers (umamahāt)"<sup>3</sup> of good character. In acquiring these virtues people differ and consequently their characters differ in respect of goodness. The Prophet alone had these four virtues in their fullest form and his character was absolutely good as the prophet Joseph had an absolutely good appearance.<sup>4</sup> Few people are completely devoid of these four virtues with the result that theirs is an absolutely evil character; they resemble the devil whose character is completely bad. The majority of people neither possess these virtues in their fullest degree nor lack them completely, but they are between the two. No human being, save the Prophet, could acquire absolutely good character; but they can achieve a character which is very near to it if they make earnest effort and follow appropriate methods. The question now arises - what is the proper way of achieving good character?

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1. I.D., III, 47; K.S., p. 430; cf. Ibid., pp. 19-24; Kindī, Rasā'il, I, 173; Avicenna, Akhḫāq, pp. 153-54. In Plato the sub-virtues are absent. In later Greek ethics they are present to some extent; see Walzer, "Aspects" pp. 221-23.

2. Tahdhīb, pp. 23-24; Akhḫāq, pp. 98-101. 3. I.D., III, 47 lines 208, 48 lines 16; K.S., p. 431. 4. I.D., III, 48; K.S., p. 431

### The Methods of Achieving Good Character.

In the ʿImiyāʾil-Sharāʿī enumerates three ways in which good character may come about.<sup>1</sup> But in the Ihyāʾ he, following Ishaqānī, enumerates two ways of acquiring good character.<sup>2</sup> In the conclusion of the section of the Ihyāʾ dealing with this problem, however, he adds a third method<sup>3</sup> which is the same as the third of the ways described in the ʿImiyāʾ. To him, then, there are three ways in which one can attain good character.

(a) In some people good character is natural (tabʿī).

It is a divine grace to them. God has created them with perfect intellect so that they are learned without acquiring knowledge by effort and virtuous without acquiring virtues by moral training. Character becomes good when the faculties of the soul are in moderation, when desire and anger obey the reason and the Sharīʿa. God has restrained some people's faculties of desire and anger at the time of creating them; he created them in such a way that they are always in moderation or reason, and are obedient to their reason and the Sharīʿa. Examples of these people are Jesus Christ, Yahyā ibn-Ishāq and all other prophets. Besides the prophets, there are people who possess good character as something natural. None can deny it, for we observe that some children are by nature truthful, generous and courageous.<sup>4</sup>

(b) Good character may be acquired by cultivation (mu-jahada) and self-training (riyāza), i.e. by taking pains to engage in those actions that usually proceed from good character.<sup>5</sup> Although with difficulty one has to repeatedly<sup>6</sup> perform good actions until they become habitual and a part of one's nature. As a result of one's frequent repetition of these the attitude that has been produced in the mind will be constant. Thus the desired actions will have become a natural habit, and their performance which was difficult at first will prove to be easy and lightsome. For example, if anyone wishes to acquire for his mind the virtue of generosity he should take pains to engage in

1. p. 44      2. Iḥyāʾ 50; cf. Sharīʿa, n.35. 3. Ibid., 52  
4. Ibid 50; ..., n.434; cf. Ishaqānī. 5. I.ḥ., III, 50; ...,  
pp.434, 433; cf. Aristotle, Ethica, pp.41-42



action that is generous, such as giving away some particular thing that he possesses. And he should not cease to be interested in this giving until he has fully entered into the spirit of it, until this giving has become habitual to him and a part of his nature and a task quite easy for him to accomplish.

Likewise, if anyone wishes to acquire for his mind the virtue of humility when perhaps at present pride has been getting the better of him, he should pay special attention to occupying himself with actions that are deferential and humble. And he should not cease to pay <sup>such</sup> ~~the~~ attention until humility becomes a part of his nature. All the qualities that are laudable to the Shari'ah have to be acquired in this way.<sup>1</sup>

Actions become habitual and natural when their agent experiences pleasure in performing them.<sup>2</sup> So, to feel pleasure in doing virtuous deeds is the sign that one has acquired virtues. A generous man is he who finds pleasure in giving away his wealth and not he who feels pain. A humble man is he who feels pleasure in his being humble. The qualities that the Shari'ah commanded men to acquire become established in the soul after men have formed such a strong habit in doing good ~~things~~ <sup>actions</sup> and in avoiding bad deeds as it produces in their minds eagerness for the former and aversion from the latter, pleasure in the former and pain in the latter. Truly virtuous men do feel pleasure and pain. The Prophet used to experience so intense a pleasure in performing his ritual prayer that he called it the delight of his eye. To perform the devotional acts and to leave undone the forbidden acts reluctantly and with painful sensations are one's following religion imperfectly, and this cannot ensure happiness in the next life. True, performing devotional acts reluctantly is far better than not to perform them at all - a reason for which God said in the Qur'an, "and that (ritual prayer) is difficult except for the submitted".

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1. Ibid. 2.I.D., III, 50-51; 4.D., p. 431; cf. Ibid., pp. 40, 47; Ibn al-Hanafi, Dhari'ah, pp. 31-32.



or attaining the happiness promised to the men of good character it is not enough to do good deeds with pleasure occasionally; on the contrary, men are commanded to do them gladly throughout their whole lives.<sup>1</sup> They have to cultivate virtue until their death. The reason why this is to be done is that the purpose of devotional acts is to produce on the soul the effect of removing from it its love for the world and of establishing in it so intense a love for God as would arouse in him eagerness to meet him, and this effect cannot be produced unless they are performed throughout one's whole life.<sup>2</sup>

As to the reason why an action is difficult to perform at first but becomes natural and easy after one repeats it, al-Shazālī points out that this is because of a peculiar relationship between the soul and the body. A quality of the soul influences the actions of the body, and an act of the body also produces an effect on the soul. The relation thus is circular, (dawr). How this relation is responsible for moral progress, i.e. for ~~the~~ becoming of an action natural and easy after it is repeated for a time, can be better illustrated by the progress in the art of calligraphy. If anyone wishes to acquire skill in calligraphy he must exercise the necessary mental perseverance. He must engage in reproducing and imitating the beautiful handwriting of a skilful writer. He must not cease to give his attention to making this beautiful writing until his attitude (malaka) in doing so is established and his skill becomes actually a mental quality. In the end he will do naturally and easily what was at first an arduous effort. At first his imitating was an act of his hand; in his mind there existed no quality of writing beautifully, and this was the reason for his finding it a difficult task. Then the effect (ta'thir) of the act of his hand i.e. writing fell on his mind and, as a result of frequent repetition, became an established quality of the mind. This quality of the soul now influences the action of his hand with the result that he can now write beautifully easily. This process, al-Shazālī says, is involved in one's acquiring any virtue.

1. Ibid; cf. Aristotle, Stoics, p.31

2. I.O., III; I.O., pp.435, 436-7; cf. Farahānī, Ma'rifat, no.33-34

Generosity, for instance, is absent in a miser. Should he wish to be generous and to begin to do what generous men do, he finds it an arduous effort because the act of giving away his wealth is at this stage only an act of his bodily members. But this bodily act produces its effect on his soul and becomes a settled quality of it. Then this mental quality exerts its influence upon his body, and he now performs the acts of giving away his wealth quite easily. Although it is apparently an act of his body, it is really the act of his soul for it now proceeds from the soul. This same process is at work in the case of all other virtuous qualities.<sup>1</sup>

(c) The third way of acquiring good character is the association (suhba) with good people for a considerable period of time.<sup>2</sup> Human nature is essentially imitative; it imitates good and bad alike both consciously and unconsciously. If a man associates himself with virtuous people for some time he does pick up many of their good qualities in such a way that he may not even be aware of it. This is why the association with the good is often recommended to the persons desirous of forming praiseworthy character. Good companionship is usually considered to be especially important in training children in virtue, for they are more imitative than grown-ups. If they are prevented from mixing with evil persons and kept in the company of the good, there is a great probability of their character being good when they grow into adults. Details about their training will be described in a later section.

Good character, then, may be achieved in the three ways mentioned above. People who have acquired it in all these three ways - i.e. by nature, by association with the virtuous, and by constantly repeating good deeds - have the highest form of good character. Persons deprived of all these three ways, that is, those who are vicious by nature, have formed a habit in vices by repeatedly committing them, and by associating themselves

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1. I.D., III, 51-52; A.S., pp.435-36; cf. Aristotle, Ethics, pp.47-8

2. I.D., III, 52; A.S., p.434; cf. Islamshah, Fakhri, p. 177

with wrong-doers, have the worst form of character. Between these two forms lies the character of most people. There are great differences among them in respect of character and these are caused by the differences in the ways in which they have acquired it.<sup>1</sup>

#### Signs of the Diseases of the Soul.

When the soul comes to this world it is immune from any spiritual disease (marad al-qalb), i.e. vice; it gradually becomes afflicted with disease owing to its entanglement with the world.<sup>2</sup> Al-Ghazālī mentions some signs which will tell that the soul is diseased and needs treatment. These signs he determines by following the method employed in ascertaining the disease of the body. A certain bodily organ is considered to be attacked with disease if it fails completely or partially to serve the function for which it is created. One's ear, for instance, is thought to be in unsound condition if one does not hear sound at all or hears it with difficulty. In like manner, the soul is to be regarded as afflicted with disease if it does not perform the function for which God created it or performs it, not readily with pleasure, but with reluctance and painful sensation.<sup>3</sup>

The especial function of the soul is, as already explained, to acquire knowledge and wisdom; God created it so that it may know Him, love Him, worship Him, feel pleasure in remembering Him, prefer His remembrance to anything else and take assistance for remembering Him from the bodily members. Knowledge of God is, as it were, the food of the soul, just as bread and water is the food of the body. Since the soul which has acquired this knowledge loves Him necessarily, the sign of its knowledge is its love for God. The mark of this love is that the soul loves God more than any of its beloved things of this world. God said in the Qur'ān, "Say: if your fathers and your sons and your brethren and your mates and your kinsfolk and property... and trade... are dearer to you than God and His Apostle and striving in His way, then wait till God brings about His command". One whose love for

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1. I.D., III, 52; E.S., pp.434-35.

2. I.D., III, 66 line 14, 62.

3. Ibid, 54; E.S., pp.438-39.

a thing other than God is stronger than his love for God has a diseased soul, as one who likes clay more than bread and water has a diseased stomach. Then to love any other-than-God-thing more than God is the sign of the soul's disease. Most people's love for the world is more than their love for God; this indicates that their souls are not in a healthy state. They are not aware of it because some diseases are such that the persons attacked by them do not know them, and the soul's diseases or vices are among these diseases.<sup>1</sup>

Those whose love for God is more than their love for things other than Him follow all His commandments and leave undone all that He prohibited them to do. They follow the Shari'a fully, and in following it, they do not have to give strain upon them; they feel pleasure in doing the duties of religion. Then, one's complete or partial failure to follow the Shari'a or one's failure to follow it with ease and pleasure, is the sign that one's love for God is not more than one's love for other-than-God-things. Such a man's soul should be regarded as attached with disease.<sup>2</sup>

The soul that loves God more than anything save Him is free from its attachment to the world, for the love of God and the love of the world, two diametrically opposed things, cannot exist together. That soul, as already explained, is free from being attached to the world whose faculties work in moderation or mean. Observance of the mean, therefore, is a thing that indicates that one's love for God is more than one's love for the world, and that one's life is in accord with the Shari'a. Observance of the mean is a sign of the health of the soul, while the deviation from it to any of the two faulty extremes is a sign of the soul's disease. The conduct of one whose soul is diseased is not balanced, moderate and free from excess and deficiency. The presence of moderation in temperament (kizāf) indicates the health of the body and the absence of its disease. The same is true of the soul.<sup>3</sup>

Thus the absence in a man of such a love for God as is more than any of his beloved things of this world is the sign that his soul is diseased or vicious. The absence of this love results in

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1. Ibid.

2. K.S., pp.438-9

3. I.D. III, 52, 54, 55



two things - (a) he does not carry out God's order or carries it out with reluctance and painful sensation, (b) he deviates from the mean or moderation in his affairs. If any of these signs is seen in a man he should hasten to cure ('ilāj) his disease, to refine (tahdhīb) his character.

#### Method of Refining Character.

The diseases that afflict the soul are these traits of character which are blameworthy to reason and the Sharī'a. Refinement of character (tahdhīb al-akhlāq) or the treatment of the soul's diseases (ma'ālaj) means the removal from the soul of these vices by following the appropriate method and bringing to it virtues or praiseworthy qualities.<sup>1</sup> Before proceeding to take measure for effecting these, one has to know which vices are present in the soul and which virtues are absent. The first thing in refining one's character is to know the defects that are in oneself. People possessed of keen insight clearly see their own faults, but most people lack this insight and are ignorant of the vicious qualities of their souls. Some people see others' faults but fail to see those in themselves.<sup>2</sup> Al-Chaḡālī therefore describes some ways in which man can know his own spiritual defects.

How to know one's own spiritual defects: The first way of man's knowing his own defects is by his keeping company with a spiritual guide (shaykh, pīr) who clearly sees the hidden defects of the soul. He will make the guide a judge for him and have full trust in him. The guide will observe him closely and tell him about his defects, hidden and manifest. Because a true guide is not available nowadays, this way of knowing defects is not useful.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, a man can know his own defects from those friends of his who are truthful, religious and have insight. He will request such friends to watch him closely and to tell him what they dislike in him. If they call his attention to any of his faults, he should be thankful to them and hasten to get rid

1. Ibid. 52. -1-

2. Ibid. 55; K.S., pp.439-40

3. Ibid.



of it. It is in this way that great leaders in Islam tried to know their own faults. This way was suggested by Miskawayh who took this idea from Galen's work Man's Understanding of His Own Defects. Like Miskawayh, al-Ghazali observes that this way, too, is not useful nowadays for the reason that an honest friend is rare to find.<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, man can know his spiritual defects from what his enemy says about him. His enemy is perhaps more useful to him than his friend in this matter, for the former sees his defects more clearly than the latter and is not diffident of him in showing them. By nature man thinks his enemy's assertion to be false, but men of insight say that what their enemies spread about them might be exaggeration but not absolutely baseless. This way of knowing defects was also suggested by Miskawayh too who took it from Galen's treatise Good People Derive Benefits from their Enemies.<sup>2</sup> The last way is by seeing the blameworthy qualities in others and ascribing them to himself. On perceiving any fault in others an individual should suspect that it is present in him also, for a believer (mu'min) is a mirror for another believer. He will realise that since men's dispositions are alike in following passions it is not unlikely that what is present in one is present in another in its essence or in a greater or less degree. He will then try to free himself from all that he dislikes in others. This is sufficient for a man desirous of rectifying himself; if he shuns every vice that he sees in others he needs none to help him in his character-refining. Jesus Christ said that he was not taught courtesy by anyone; he learnt it by perceiving the ignorant's misbehaviour and keeping himself from it.<sup>3</sup> This way, too, has its parallel in Miskawayh's Tahdhib which has its source in al-Kindi's work.

**Spiritual physicians:** Being aware of the evil qualities in himself, man will proceed to remove them. The task of curing the soul's diseases is extremely difficult, but it becomes easy to a

1. I.D., III, 55-56; K.S., pp. 439; cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhib, p. 189

2. I.D., III, 56; K.S., p. 439; cf. Ibid., pp. 189-90.

3. Ibid.; cf. Ibid. pp. 190-191.

great extent if he submits himself to a skilled and competent spiritual physician. True guides are those religious scholars (ulama) who are gnostics, intelligent, seers of the soul's defects, kind-hearted, advise people in religious matters, have already purified their souls from vices and are eager to help others in their effort to purify their soul. Of course, it is difficult to find such guides, for most of the religious scholars are corrupt, immoral and worldly; their souls are afflicted with diseases, their character is full of evils; how can they cure the diseases in others' soul? Because of the lack of the true spiritual physician, the medical science of the soul (tibb al-qalb) is now dead and the diseases in people's soul have become so serious that their ruin is inevitable. As the treatment of the bodily disease is not possible without the advice of those who have studied the science of medicine, so the common men cannot cure the diseases of their soul without seeking advice from spiritual physicians. The soul's vices, their hidden causes, the specific way of getting rid of each particular vice and all other things related to mortification and moral discipline are clearly known to a true guide. The ordinary men do not know these and hence they need a guide. The path of religion is obscure while the devil's paths are many and manifest. A person who has no shaykh to guide him in his travel on the path to God is often led by the devil to his own path. He is like one who walks through a dangerous desert without a guide; such a man endangers himself and ultimately ruins himself. One who is dependent upon himself in refining his character is comparable to a tree which grows by itself and dries up very soon, or to a self-grown tree which, though it survives for a time and grows leaves, bears no fruit. He who has resolved to refine his character, therefore, needs a guide and should cling to him, the way a blind man on the bank of a river clings to his guide; he should surrender to the guide all the matters related to his

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1. I.D., III, 54, 55, 64-65, 56, 58; A.D., p. 438.  
 2. (see over) I.D., III, 65, 56.

spiritual development. Should a thing which the guide asks him to do appear absolutely unreasonable, he should not object to it or ask him about the reason for his prescribing it to him. He should have conviction that even if the shaykh makes mistakes in guiding him, his benefit will be greater than the benefit he will derive by walking, though rightly, on the path without a guide.<sup>2</sup> If a man does not find a true guide his task of <sup>2</sup>refining character becomes difficult; nevertheless, he should make effort to improve his character by himself.

<sup>ā</sup> Principle of refining character: The principle that al-Sharī suggests for the treatment of the soul's disease is analogous to the one usually employed in curing the bodily diseases. The medical science of the soul should in this view, follow the medical science of the body.<sup>1</sup> A certain bodily disease is cured by applying a medicine whose effect is the opposite (diā) of that which is the cause of the disease. The same is true of the cure of the soul's diseases or vices: ignorance can be cured by acquiring knowledge, miserliness by spending money, and so forth.

A certain kind of medicine can cure a bodily disease provided that it is of the required power and of the required amount and is applied for the required period of time; if it is not of the required amount etc., it does harm to the patient. For this reason a physician has to determine, before prescribing a certain medicine the necessary amount etc., of it, and he determines these considering the present state of the disease, the magnitude of its cause, the physical strength of the patient, his occupation, his age and so on. Similarly, in curing a disciple's spiritual disease, the guide should not ask him to begin to practise what is the opposite of it unless he knows all about him and his disease. As a physician kills many of his patients if he prescribes the same medicine to all his patients who are suffering from different types of diseases, so a guide invites spiritual death to many of his disciples if he engages all of them in the same form of training. He must consider, before recommending remedial measure for a disease of a disciple's soul, the seriousness of his disease, his body's health, his age, his temperament, and then think as to what

1. Ibid, 52-53; K.S., pp. 440-1, 433-4; cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, pp. 175-6

form of self-training he will be able to undergo with good intention. If a disciple is found to be ignorant of the major requirements of the Sahri'a what the guide should ask him first is to know about ablution, ritual prayer and other external acts of devotion (zawāhir al-'ibādāt). If he is found to be engaged in acquiring wealth by unlawful means or committing any other sin the guide should ask him to shun it first. When his outer self (zāhir) is beautified by devotional acts and his bodily members are purified from committing manifest sins (al-ma'āsī as-zāhira) the guide should proceed to correct his inner self (bātin) by engaging him in doing the opposites of the evil traits of his character. Should the disciple possess surplus wealth the guide will take it from him and spend it in good causes thereby removing his soul's attachment to it. If self-esteem and pride are dominating in him, the guide will send him to the market to beg from people, because the tendency to dominate others cannot be lessened except by dishonour and there is no dishonour greater than begging. The guide will cure all other evil qualities of his disciple's soul by engaging him in doing the opposites of them.<sup>1</sup>

If a disciple is found unable to shun any evil quality immediately by practising the opposite of it, his guide should adopt a technique which consists in his effort to shift the disciple's habit in that quality to another quality less blameworthy than that. For instance, if he is unwilling or unable to shun his love of honour at once by practising its opposite, his guide will engage him in doing such deeds as would earn for him only a little degree of fame. Gluttony is a quality which cannot be got rid of immediately; a gluttonous disciple will be asked first to eat a few mouthfuls less than his usual quantity of food; then he will be engaged in preparing tasteful food and giving it to others without himself taking any part of it; this he will be doing until his power to resist temptation for food becomes strong and his gluttony is removed.<sup>2</sup> This technique

1. Ibid; cf. Ibid.

2. I.D., III, 53-54



will be adopted in regard to all other qualities which a disciple is unable to get rid of at once.<sup>2</sup>

Practice in the opposite of a soul's vice, however, has a limit to it. When the soul comes back to the state of the mean in respect of the opposite quality which one is practising one must stop practising it. The attainment of the mean is the aim to be achieved in character-training. It is the mean where the health of the soul lies. If practice in the opposite of an evil quality is continued to the extent that the opposite quality has crossed its mean point, the soul has again become diseased, has acquired a new vice and, therefore, needs to be cured again. In curing, for instance, the disease of miserliness by frequently performing the act of spending money in good causes, if one comes to a state between prodigality and miserliness, practice in it must be stopped, for the soul has recovered its health. If the soul has come to a state that spending money has exceeded the mean, the soul has got rid of miserliness, but acquired prodigality which is to be cured by its opposite, i.e. not spending money. What is necessary, then, is that a disciple should stop his practice in the opposite of a vice as soon as the mean is achieved. With the regaining of the mean he has regained the health of his soul, and his duty now is to preserve it.<sup>1</sup> As to how he is to maintain it, al-Ghasālī does not say anything. Miskawayh gave several suggestions for preserving the soul's health if it is already present.<sup>2</sup>

But practically how to know that the soul is at the state of the mean in regard to a particular <sup>quality</sup> al-Ghasālī suggests a way in which one can easily know it. He says that if a certain action which generally proceeds from evil character is easier and more pleasurable to a person than its opposite action which usually issues from good character, his soul will be considered to be in a state deviating from the mean. For example, to deprive of money those who have the right (haqq) to it is an act that arises from evil character; if this is more pleasure-giving to an individual than his spending money on them, it is a mark that his soul has fallen short of the mean in spending money. But if his spending

1. Ibid., 95; K.S., p.436. 2. Tahdib, pp.177-191.



money <sup>on</sup> to those who have no right to it is easier and more pleasure-giving to him than his not spending money rightly, it is an indication that his soul has crossed the mean ever. In this way one can know whether or not his soul is in moderation in respect of a particular trait of character.<sup>1</sup>

Then, practising the opposites of the evil qualities of the soul until the attainment of moderation is the general principle (al-asl al-kullī)<sup>2</sup> to be used in refining character. That the opposite of each specific vice is and how to practise it al-Ghazālī discusses separately and we will speak of them in the next chapter. That the rule in getting rid of vices is to do the opposite of what the carnal soul (nafā) desires is expressed in its entirety by God in a single verse of the Qur'ān, "and as for he who fears to stand in the presence of his Lord and forbids the soul from low desires, then surely Paradise - that is the abode". The Prophet taught his companions about how and to what extent the lower soul is to be opposed. He is the only physician of the soul's diseases; the religious scholars are his heirs. To oppose passions is extremely difficult; it needs a strong determination. There are people who, having shunned the grave sins think that their character has become completely good and stop mortification considering it as a thing now unnecessary. This is a mistake of theirs. Man should continue self-training until he sees in himself all the marks of good character.<sup>3</sup>

Marks of Good Character.

According to al-Ghazālī, the attributes of the believers (sifāt al-mu'minīn) are the marks of good character, and the attributes of the hypocrites (sifāt al-munāfiqīn) are the signs of evil character. In the Qur'ān God stated many qualities of the believers; the Prophet also ascribed many attributes to them and regarded these attributes as what forms good character. These qualities al-Ghazālī looks upon as the result and also the signs of good character. He says that if an individual possesses

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1. Ibid., 59-61; F.S., pp.441-42

2. Ibid.

all these qualities he has completely good character; if he possesses none of them he has completely evil character; if he possesses some of them his character is good to the extent he has them. That the qualities of the believers are the marks of good character al-Ghazālī proves by quoting the Prophet's statement, "The most perfect of the believers in respect of belief is the best of them in respect of character".<sup>1</sup>

The attributes of the believers described by God in the Qur'ān al-Ghazālī states<sup>2</sup> by quoting the verses in which they have been mentioned. These verses are the following:

"Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers, and who keep aloof from what is vain, and who act aiming at purification, and who guard their private parts except before their mates and those whom their right hands possess for they surely are not blamable, but whoever seeks to go beyond that, those are they that exceed the limits; and those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant, and those who keep a guard on their prayers; these are they who are the heirs who shall inherit the Paradise". "They who turn (to God), who serve (Him), who praise (Him), who fast, who bow down, who prostrate themselves, who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and who keep the limits of God: and give good news to the believers". "And the servants of the Beneficent God are they who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them they say, peace. And they who pass the night prostrating themselves before their Lord and standing. And they who say: O our Lord, turn away from us the chastisement of Hell, surely the chastisement thereof is a lasting evil: surely it is an evil abode and (evil) place to stay. And they who, when they spend are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and (keep) between these the just mean. And they who do not call upon<sup>a</sup> God with God and do not slay the soul which God has forbidden except in the requirements of justice, and (who) do not commit fornication. And they who do not bear witness to what is false, when they pass by what is vain they ~~pass~~ <sup>pass</sup> by nobly. And they who, when reminded of the communications of

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1. Ibid., 59-61; ..., pp.441-42. 2. Ibid.

their Lord, do not fall down thereat deaf and blind. And they who say: O our Lord, grant us in our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes and make us guides to those who guard (against evil)".

Some of the attributes which the Prophet mentioned as the attributes of the believers and which he considered to be the traits of good character al-Ghazālī states by quoting the Traditions containing them. Some of these Traditions are the following: "The believer likes for his brother what he likes for himself" "Whoever believes in God and in the Last Day should respect his guest". "Whoever believes in God and in the Last Day should respect his neighbour". "Whoever believes in God and in the Last Day should speak good or keep silent". "If you see a believer silent and sober come close to him for these are indications of his wisdom". "Whoever feels pleasure in doing good and pain in doing evil is a believer". "It is unlawful for a believer to look at his brother in a hurtful manner". "It is unlawful for a Muslim to frighten another Muslim". "The believers aspire after prayer, fasting and worship, while the hypocrites aspire after food and drink as do the lower animals". Ḥātim al-Aṣamm said - the believer busies himself with reflecting on good things and acquiring good morals, while the hypocrite with greed and hope; the believer does not fear anyone but God and the hypocrite fears all save God; the believer seeks help only from God and the hypocrite seeks help from all except God; the believer spends money in religious activities, while the hypocrite sacrifices religion for wealth; the believer obeys God and fears Him, and the hypocrite disobeys Him and rejoices; the believer likes solitude and the hypocrite likes association with wrong doers; the believer cultivates for the future life but fears that he may not reap the harvest, while the hypocrite does not cultivate but hopes for harvesting.<sup>1</sup>

A certain scholar, al-Ghazālī points out, has collected the marks of good character and described them as follows: a man of good character is <sup>humble</sup> modest, takes suffering to be easy, prays to God for the good of all, tells the truth, speaks little,

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1. I.D., III, 60; K.S., p.442

performs many good actions, commits only few vices and seldom does what is vain; he is virtuous, patient, thankful, satisfied, persever<sup>ing</sup>~~ing~~, temperate and kind-hearted; he neither curses people, nor rebukes them, nor hates them, nor backbites, nor makes haste in any matter; he is not clever or sly; he is not gloomy but cheerful; if he loves others he loves them for God and if he hates them he hates them for God; if he is satisfied or dissatisfied with anyone he is so only for God. ʿĪsuf ibn-ʿAbbāt said - Good character combines in itself ten qualities, namely, <sup>to</sup> fulfill ~~many~~ promises, <sup>to</sup> do ~~many~~ justice, not to take revenge, to rectify evil by good, to seek excuses for misdeeds, to endure suffering caused by others, to reproach oneself, to search for faults, not of others but of oneself, to behave well with both children and grown-ups and to speak gently to others, whether superior or inferior. ʿAbū ʿĪsā Tustarī said that the <sup>ultimate</sup> ~~many~~ sign of good character is to endure hardship, to be merciful to the oppressor, to pray for his forgiveness and to be kind to him.<sup>1</sup>

The most obvious sign of good character is, according to al-Shazālī, one's patience over suffering and forbearance of hardships received from others, for one can endure suffering when one has purified his soul from rancour, spite, etc. Al-Shazālī cites some examples of the endurance of suffering and maltreatment. He relates the traditions on the prophet's forgiveness of those who oppressed him and insulted him in various ways. He also narrates several stories in order to show how great a patience was shown by Ibrāhīm ibn-ʿAdʿhan, ʿAlī ibn-ʿĪsā, ʿAbū ʿĪsā ʿĪlāh, Sayyid ibn-ʿĪsā, Companion ʿAlī, ʿAlī ibn-ʿĪsā, ʿĪsā ibn-ʿĪsā and other saints and pūris on the injustice and maltreatment they received from the ignorant on different occasions. They were able to endure harsh behaviour because they were satisfied with all that God allotted to them. To achieve such a satisfaction is indeed the end of good character. Dissatisfaction with what God does is the worst form of character.<sup>2</sup>

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1. I.D., III, 60; A.D., p.442    2. I.D., III, 50, 62



To al-Ghazālī, then, the qualities mentioned above are the marks of good character. He urges people who have some of these to strive to preserve those qualities which they already possess and, at the same time, to acquire those which they lack. They should not stop mortification and self-training unless all the signs of good character are seen in them.<sup>1</sup> To acquire most of the traits of good character becomes possible for those who have been properly trained in their childhood.

#### Training Children in Good Character.

Like Miskawayh and Bryson, al-Ghazālī is fully aware of the importance of childhood for the development of character. At the time of their birth children are not inclined to evil but have the potentiality to be inclined to it. Their souls are pure, clean like precious jewels and devoid of ideas, but are capable of receiving any idea that may be presented to them later. If children are trained in good morals in a proper manner, they can become men of character when they grow into adults and become able to attain happiness in this world as well as in the next. If they are trained in bad morals or are not trained at all but left to grow up by themselves like the lower animals, they possess evil character when they are grown-ups. Should parents and school teachers guide them to the right path, they get a share in the good actions that they perform; if they train them in evil, they get a share in the evil deeds which they do as a result of their training. The Sharīʿa made it obligatory on the parents' part to train their children in such a way that they may get salvation from Hell-fire in the hereafter. In the Qurʾān God said, "O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones...."

Al-Ghazālī lays emphasis upon three principles which parents and teachers should follow in training children in good character. The first is to directly<sup>to</sup> order them to do what is good and to avoid what is bad from a religio-moral viewpoint. This direct instruction is to be imparted both at home and in

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1. I.I., III, 59, 62    2. Ibid. 62; A.I., pp. 444-45; cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhib, p. 56



the school. Reward for their doing good and punishment for doing evil should also be given. The second principle is to keep them away from evil companions. Children, more than grown-ups, imitate others; most of what they learn is by imitation. If they are allowed to mix with the vicious, they pick up the bad qualities that are in them. The third thing that their training should be such that they cannot become accustomed to an easy and luxurious life, for if they develop the habit of living in luxury from the very beginning of their lives most of their time, when they are grown-ups, will be spent in seeking the means of luxury and they will have little time for working for the attainment of happiness in the next world. These three principles are what govern al-Ghazālī's teachings on children's training in virtue.<sup>1</sup>

A child's training in praiseworthy character should, al-Ghazālī says, begin from the start of their lives. He should be nursed and suckled by a woman who is virtuous and who eats lawful food. Such a woman's character, manner and habit exert good influence upon the child. The milk whose source is lawful food has blessing in it, and if the child is nourished by it his nature (ṭaba') becomes inclined to all that is good. But if he is nourished by milk whose source is unlawful food his clay (ṭīn) is kneaded from impurity and wickedness and his nature is inclined to all that is evil.<sup>2</sup>

When the child begins to speak he should be taught to utter the name of God. When the power of discernment (ta'yiz) is manifested in him special care needs to be taken of him. His feeling of shyness is the sign of the manifestation of this power. He is now bashful in his manner and less spontaneous in his behaviour; he distinguishes between good and evil and distances the latter and shrinks from it. Shyness in a child is not bad at all; it is God's gift to him; it indicates that he will be able to observe moderation in his affairs, that his soul is pure and that his intellect at its maturity will be perfect to a great extent. A bashful child, then, must not be neglected or left to association with people of evil character.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid. 2. Ibid. 3. Ibid; cf. Tahdhīb, p.56

The desire for food is what appears first in a child. He should be taught the proper manner of taking it. He should be asked to begin with God's name, to use his right hand, and to start with that part of it which is adjacent to him. He should not be the first to go to the dining table, should not gaze at different dishes or at others eating, should chew his mouthful well, not smear his hands and clothes with food and should not overeat. He should occasionally be compelled to eat bread without condiments. That gluttony is a vice should be impressed upon him by comparing the glutton with the lower animals, by rebuking gluttonous children in his presence, and by speaking highly of those who are content with little quantities of food.<sup>1</sup>

Interest in appropriate dress should be created in children. A male child should like white and coarse dress and hate coloured silken clothes. He should be told that people most fit for wearing clothes of gaudy colour are women and effeminate. Those children who wear splendid dress should be rebuked in his presence so that a sense of hatred for it may be produced in him. He must not be allowed to associate with them. So completely should he be kept away from them that he should not even be given a chance to see them, for if he sees them the desire for proud dress and other things of luxury will be created in him. If he is not guarded against his association with the vicious, he will become a liar, jealous, a thief, calumnious, importunate, meddling, spiteful and malicious.<sup>2</sup>

In the school the boy should be taught the Qur'ān, Traditions, stories about the pious and the biographies of the Prophet's companions so that the love for them may be implanted in his mind. Nothing evil and indecent should be imparted to him through the media of poems, stories and life histories. Like Miskawayh, al-Ghazālī condemns reading and reciting love poetry and mixing with those teachers who maintain that love

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1. Ibid; cf. Ibid., pp.55,58-59. 2. Ibid, III, 63; K.S., pp.445; cf. Ibid, p.57

poetry sharpens a child's brain and makes him clever. The evil influence of love poetry on the child's tender mind is tremendous. The teachers who like it are not really teachers; they are devils in men's guise; they sow the seeds of evil and corruption in children's immature minds.<sup>1</sup>

Virtuous acts should be praised before the child, and vicious acts should be condemned. If he does any laudable deed he should be rewarded with what pleases him and praised in the presence of others. If he does any evil deed for the first time, it is better to ignore it, particularly when he tries to hide it. On repeating it, however, he should be reproached secretly and be warned not to do it again. The parents should deal well with him lest his respect for them may be impaired. When he tends to do any evil his mother should threaten him by mentioning to him the fear of his father. He must not be allowed to do anything secretly, for one does in secret only what one thinks blameworthy; if he openly does all that he does he can hardly get the chance of doing evil.<sup>2</sup>

The boy should be habituated in rough and hard living. His hours of eating, sleeping, playing etc. should be regulated. He will not be allowed to sleep during the day, nor too much at night, for these make one lazy and physically weak. His bed should not be soft until his limbs become strong. Every day on returning from school he should take physical exercise for an hour. The desire for comfort in regard to food, bed and dress must not be allowed to develop in a child. His play should not involve intense fatigue. If his superiors pass by him he should stop playing, for this is a sign of regard for them. He should be taught to develop a male attitude and capacity to endure hardship; if he is beaten by his teachers he should not cry, for this is the conduct of slaves and women.<sup>3</sup>

The child should be forbidden to boast to his companions of anything that his parents possess, or of his food, dress etc.

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1. I.D., III, 63; K.S., p.445; cf. Ibid. p.57

2. I.D., III, 63; K.S., pp.445-46; cf. Ibid., pp.56-57, 58, 60.

3. I.D., III, 63; K.S., p.446; cf. Ibid., pp.59, 60-62.



He should be taught how to be modest to all, to show respect for them, and to use sweet words while talking to them. If his parents are rich he should be told that credit lies in giving things to others and not in taking them from them; if he comes of a poor family he should be taught that greed for others' things is a sign of meanness and disgrace and that this is the dog's habit. That greed for money, gold and silver is bad will be told<sup>to</sup> him clearly; he should be cautioned against these much more than he should be cautioned against snakes and scorpions.<sup>1</sup>

The boy should be taught, when in the company of others, not to spit, blow his nose, yawn, cross his legs, beat his chin with his forearm or support his head with his hand for this is a sign of laziness. He should be taught to sit properly. He should be forbidden from talking too much for this is a sign of meanness, from swearing truthfully or falsely, from being the first to speak; he should not speak except in giving answer of what is asked of him; he should only listen to his superiors. He should stand up when those who are older than him come in and make room for them and sit beside them. He should not utter vile speech nor curse or scold or mix with those who have these bad habits. Children usually learn these from evil associates, and to keep them away from them is most needed in training them in good character.<sup>2</sup>

At the age of seven the child should be asked to follow the rules of religion. He should be asked to clean his body, to perform his ritual prayer (ṣalā) and to fast on some days of the month of Ramaḍān. If he omits his ritual prayer when he is ten years of age, corporal punishment should be inflicted upon him. He should be cautioned against those deeds for which the Sharī'a prescribed penalty (ḥadd).<sup>3</sup> When he approaches maturity (bulūgh) the reality behind all that in which he has hitherto been trained should be clearly explained to him. He should be told that the purpose of taking food is to get strength for worshipping God.<sup>3</sup> The reason for the soul's coming to this

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1. I.D., III, 63; cf. Ibid., pp. 60-61, 62.

2. Ibid.; K.S., p. 446; cf. Ibid. p. 61

3. Ibid.; cf. Ibid. pp. 58, 133-35.

world is to acquire 'provision' for the next. This is transitory, while the life after death is eternal. Intelligent, therefore is he whose aim is to enjoy the eternal delights of the hereafter. The nature of the happiness of the world-to-come, delights of Paradise, torments of Hell, reward of good actions and punishment of evil ones in the life after death - all have to be explained to him clearly. All these will be inscribed on the plate of his mind provided that he was properly trained in his childhood. In fact one's training in childhood has much to do with the development of character in one's youth. The good training that Sahl at-Tustari received when he was a boy al-Ghazali states, in order to show how this made the rest of his life thoroughly pious and virtuous.<sup>1</sup>

Conditions for Fortification and the Disciple's Gradual Advance on the Path to God.

Men, al-Ghazali says, have to walk on the path of the hereafter (sabil- al-akhira) should they wish to attain the supreme happiness, but they do not come to walk on the path because they have no will to do so, and they have no will because they have no faith (iman) in God and in the next world. One who has faith cannot but devote the greater part of his time to work for attaining the eternal delights of Paradise and escaping from everlasting torments of Hell. This faith is not merely the verbal utterance of the two sentences of the confession of faith (kalimatay ash-shahada), but a belief in what is contained in them with all truthfulness and sincerity. The reason why people lack this faith is the non-existence of God-fearing religious scholars (fulana) who know about God, can guide others to the path leading them to Him, remind them of the insignificance and transitoriness of this world and the permanence and eternal character of the next. Because such scholars who are true guides on the path of religion are almost absent, people have become totally indifferent to the hereafter. There are few religious scholars in society; they seek this world as much as do the worldlings; so they themselves are deviated from the path to God and are not in a position to guide others to it. The path of this world and that of the next are

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1. I.D., III, 63-64; K.S., p.446; cf. Ibid. p.62



opposed to each other; as the more one advances to the east the remoter one is from the west, so the more engrossed one is in this world the remoter is one from the next. Then, the cause of God's path being devoid of walkers (sālikūn) comes in the final analysis, to be the lack of God-fearing religious scholars.<sup>1</sup>

Should an individual somehow become mindful ~~to~~<sup>of</sup> the world-to-come and intend to walk on its path, he finds himself unable to do so because of the lack of sufficient knowledge of the path. Al-Ghazālī, therefore, feels it obligatory on his part to describe the way in which one has to traverse the path. He says that a disciple or murīd (one who intends to walk on the path) has to advance on the path gradually stage after stage. (a) At the outset he has to fulfill four conditions. (b) Then he should submit himself to a spiritual guide (shaykh). (c) After this he should have a sort of fortress in which he will take shelter from the enemies who will try to cut him off from the path. (d) Lastly he will walk along the path by continuously practising a certain form of the mention of God (dhikr Allāh).<sup>2</sup>

(a) There are some obstacles ('awā'iq) existing between man and God. To remove these obstacles is the first task of the disciple. One who does not remove these is among those about whom God said in the Qur'an, "And We have made before them a barrier and a barrier behind them, then We have covered them over so that they do not see". These barriers are four, namely, wealth, influence (jāh), blindly following (taqlīd) a particular school of thought (madhāb), and sin (ma'siya). The removal of these four things by the disciple is his fulfilling the four conditions in the beginning of his walking along the path. By wealth al-Ghazālī means that wealth which is more than one needs for oneself and one's family. Superfluous wealth is an obstacle because the mind remains attached to it, whereas the disciple's mind should be free from attachment to the world. So he should

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1. I.D., III, 64; K.S., pp.447-48. 2. I.D., III, 65; K.S., p.448

divert himself of all his superfluous wealth. By influence also al-Chazālī means excessive influence. This is an obstacle because the man who has too much of it has to remain busy with worldly things all the time. The disciple can remove this barrier by living in a place where there is no chance of his acquiring it, by avoiding the actions that make one famous and by doing those deeds that produce in others' minds a hatred for their agents. Blindly following a particular school of thought is a barrier, for the man who does so becomes obstinate to such an extent that he is unwilling to accept any useful advice of others and because such a man seldom craves for the purification of the soul. The disciple need not follow any madhhab. He should develop a liberal attitude and believe firmly that there is no God <sup>but God</sup> and Muhammad is His apostle. If he truly holds this belief he cannot follow his passions for to follow them is to worship them and not God; if he does not worship anything but God the reality of the things he hitherto blindly believed in will be intuitive to him. He should therefore shun his interest in sectarian controversies (mujāzala) and his obstinacy for the madhhab he follows. Sin is a barrier inasmuch as the soul of the one who repeatedly commits it becomes dark owing to which truth cannot be reflected on it. Taking unlawful food takes the soul completely dark. To remove the veil of sin the disciple should resort to 'repentance' and should determine not to take unlawful food. In addition to his completely doing the external duties of the Shari'a (zawāhir ash-Shar'), the disciple should shun all the manifest sins (al-ma'āsī az-zāhira).<sup>1</sup>

(b) By removing the barriers of wealth, influence, blindly following a madhhab and sin the disciple has fulfilled the four conditions that lie in the beginning of the path. He is now like a man who has purified his body by taking a bath and taking resolution and is ready to perform his ritual prayer and is in need of one to lead it. He is now prepared to go on the path and needs a guide, a teacher. The need of a guide has already been explained to us in a previous section. If he is lucky to

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1. I.D., III, 65; L.I., no.44399; E.I., p.90.

find a true guide he should completely submit himself to him, so completely that he will not even ask the guide for the reason of any of his advice to him, not to speak of objecting to it.

(c) The guide will put him into a sort of fortress (hiṣṇ) in order to save him from what might harm his spiritual progress. The fortress has four walls, namely, solitude, silence, hunger and wakefulness. The disciple's motive in traversing the path has been to improve his character with a view to beholding his Lord and attaining nearness to Him, and the fulfilment of this motive is greatly assisted by these four things. Hunger is useful in ten ways.<sup>1</sup> The necessary degree of hunger will be described in the following chapter. Wakefulness will soften his soul and make it pure like a pearl and a brilliant mirror. The light of truth will be reflected in such a soul, and he will clearly see the <sup>po</sup>importance of the world-to-come and the insignificance of this world and its evils. Consequently he will be helpful to him in his effort to be pious and godfearing. By being solitary he will be free from his entanglements with the world and able to control his eyes, ears and other senses which are the passages to the soul. His control over these will stop the entering of new evil ideas into the soul, and this will enable him to easily <sup>to</sup>purge the soul from the vices that are in it. Complete control over the senses cannot be achieved unless one's solitude is in a dark room. If the disciple has no dark room, he should cover his head with a blanket; in such a condition the voice of truth is heard and God's majesty is seen.<sup>2</sup>

(d) Then the disciple will begin to walk along the path. First he will have to remove the obstacles ('aṣabāt) existing on the path. These obstacles are the same as the vices that are generated in the soul owing to its attachment to the world. After resolving to walk along the path he removed four obstacles - wealth, influence, sin and blindly following a particular

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1. I.D., III, 72-76; A.S. p.450. 2. I.D., III, 65-66; A.S., p.450

school of thought; the obstacles he will now remove are the traces in the soul of these four things. At that time he purified his outer self (zāhir); now he will purify his inner self (bātin) from blameworthy qualities. In removing these qualities he will begin with the easiest of these and the principle that he will follow is, as already explained, one of opposite.<sup>1</sup> X

When the disciple has purified the soul from all the vices he has become fit to mention (dhikr) God in an especial way. He will be asked by his guide to do only those religious duties which are obligatory (farā'id wa rawātib), for remembrance of God which he is going to do continuously, is the gist and the fruit of all the religious activities. He should not be engaged in remembrance before his soul has completely been freed from attachment to other-than-God-things. The sign of this freedom is to feel in himself such an intense love for God that he becomes like a lover who has no thought save the thought of his beloved. Then his mind is in this state, the guide will put him into a nook (ḡāwiyā) and <sup>appoint</sup> fix a man to provide him with a small quantity of lawful food. He will ask him to constantly repeat the word Allāh (God) or the phrase subhān Allāh (glory be to God) or any other form of mention of God which he may consider suitable to him. This he will repeat until his tongue will cease to move and the word or the phrase will begin to flow on the tongue without moving it. This will go on until the trace of the flowing of the word or the phrase on the tongue will be lost and the image of the word will be fixed in the soul. Then the image will also be lost and only the meaning of the word or the phrase will so completely occupy the soul that nothing other than it will find any place in it. So firmly will the meaning be established in the soul that he will not be able to separate it from the soul even if he tries his best to do so. The attainment of this state of mind is indeed the end of mortification through strenuous effort. After this, nothing remains in the disciple's choice. All that he has now to do is to wait for

the descent of God's mercy in the form of a light that will illumine his soul and enable him to see directly what he cannot apprehend by the intellect. Through mystical intuition he will know many subtle affairs of the divine world which are unlawful and indeed impossible to describe.<sup>1</sup>

1. I.D., III, 66-68; K.S., pp.45<sup>o</sup>-51.



## CHAPTER IV

### VICES

#### Preliminaries

An attempt has been made in the preceding chapter to consider al-Ghazālī's thought concerning the meaning of character, the possibility of its changeability and the process of bringing about this change the various aspects of which are dealt with under several captions. The meaning of virtues and vices as constituents of good and evil character is pointed out in connection with the first problem, and in relation to the last<sup>1</sup> method in which they can be acquired or removed from the soul is stated in a general way. The present chapter deals mainly with the nature of individual vices and the way in which each vice can be banished by following the general method already considered. These are called by al-Ghazālī (riyāda) the details of self-training in the removal of every vice.<sup>1</sup> In effect, however, these are discussed by him not for every vice but only for those vices which constitute the roots (usūl) from which others stem; self-training in the removal of the latter which are very many in number need not be discussed because, he says, with the vanishing of the root vices there would be nothing to proceed from them.<sup>2</sup> Since vice and virtues are terms related to each other, dealing with a vice involves its correlative; virtues also are therefore treated in this chapter.

The root vices in the removal of which self-training is needed are enumerated by al-Ghazālī as greed in food, excess in sexual desire, desire for excessive speech, anger, envy and rancour, love of the world, love of wealth and miserliness, love of influence and hypocrisy, pride and conceit and delusion. Strictly speaking, delusion is not a root vice, but misconception about many moral matters particularly about one's possessing good character-traits<sup>3</sup> and hence it constitutes a part of the method of refining character. This is plain from the arbaʿīn where it is included not in the list of root vices but in the method of self-

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1. I.D., III, 63. 2. I.D., pp. 100, 175. 3. Ibid., p. 175

training and mortification.<sup>1</sup> In the Ihyā' and the Imiyā' it is included in the list because its discussion after pride and conceit as one of their cause is felt necessary. In the arba'in excess in sexual desire is also omitted in the list of root vices, but conceit and envy are treated here as independent root vices and not as parts of pride and anger respectively as in the other works; in this way the number of the root vices in this work too is shown to be ten.

Some of these vices are, as will later be seen, deviations from the mean, and for them mainly and also for others the term vices (radhā'il)<sup>2</sup> is used following the philosophers. All of these root vices are also referred to as evil character-traits (asawī al-akhlāq)<sup>3</sup> and blameworthy character-traits (akhlāq madhmūma)<sup>4</sup> following the Qur'ān and Tradition in which the word character-trait occurs not infrequently. They are also mentioned as blameworthy qualities (sifāt madhmūma)<sup>5</sup>, abominations in the soul (khabā'ith bāṭina, khabā'ith fī an-nafs, sifāt khobītha)<sup>6</sup>, diseases of the soul (amrād al-qalb, 'ilal al-qalb)<sup>7</sup> and destructive qualities (sifāt muhlakāt)<sup>8</sup> or inward destructive qualities; these phrases, though they occur occasionally in the Qur'ān and Tradition, are in common use among the sūfīs, and the employment of them by al-Ghazālī reflects the influence of the sūfīs upon him. His use of these three different kinds of terms for the same vices is not accidental: on the contrary, it is done consciously in order to signify that sūfīsm, the Sharī'a and the good elements in philosophic ethics are in accord with each other.

The removal of these ten vices is regarded by al-Ghazālī as the purification of the soul (tathīr al-bāṭin, tazkiyat al-qalb)<sup>9</sup> and also as the polishing of the soul (tasḥīl al-qalb, tasḥīl an-nafs)<sup>10</sup>. Purification is obligatory upon every individual (fard 'ayn) and the most important work in life.<sup>11</sup> To support

1. pp.179-81. 2. I.D., III, 163, 226, 299; A.D., pp.34, 199.  
3. I.D., III, 251, 205. 4. J.A., pp.6, 27; A.D., pp.2, 10, 164.  
5. I.D., II, 161, III, 251. 6. A.D., 149; I.D., III, 227, 167, 163;  
J.A., p.517. 7. I.D., III, 17, 226. 8. J.A., p.23; I.D., III, 239.  
9. I.D., II, 215, III, 205, 300; A.D., pp.2, 100. 10. A.D., p.10.  
11. Ibid, p.227

this idea he quotes the Qur'anic verse in which success (falah) in the future life is made dependent upon it.<sup>1</sup> Vices draw the soul away from God.<sup>2</sup> They cause punishment in the future life—a reason why they are called the destructive qualities; destructive here means causing great suffering in the hereafter<sup>3</sup> and not annihilation of being, as al-Fārābī supposes for some people; sometimes, however, it is also used to mean causing suffering in this life.<sup>4</sup> In the case of some vices certain teachings of al-Ghazālī concern the lower grade and others are intended for the higher which also includes those of the lower. The former are appropriate to the pious while the latter are relevant to the mystics. Purification of the soul will only be complete when all these ten vices have been removed. The reason for this lies in al-Ghazālī's theory of the interconnection of vices: a vice may be caused by many other vices and it in turn causes some others. So if a single root vice is left unremedied the soul is defiled by it and also by other vices generated from it. This idea is clearly expressed at the end of the exposition of purification in the Arba'in. Besides generating other vices in accordance with the theory of interconnection given above each root vice has, as already mentioned in the definition of character, its external manifestation in the form of evil acts of the body members.<sup>5</sup> These evil acts are those forbidden in the Shari'a; the terms used by al-Ghazālī for these are identical with the words occurring in it, namely vile action (fahshā'), act of disobedience (ma'siya), crime (jurm), sin (ithm), abominable action (munkar), evil deed (sū') and so on. The Shari'a, he says, explicitly stated the reason for avoiding these acts — they have a bad effect on the soul metaphorically described as dark spots, changes in its form etc. But owing to his theory of circular relationship between the soul and the body, he says, something more,

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1. Ibid, p. 100

2. Ibid, p. 189

3. I.D., II, 161, III, 251, 301; A.D., p.535; N.D., p.69; B.H., p.151

4. B.H., p. 138.

5. I.D., III, 297

namely, when, as a result of these evil acts, the quality of the soul from which they proceeded is strengthened,<sup>1</sup> similar evil acts proceed from it more easily than before, and there again contribute to the greater strengthening of the quality—a circular process continues indefinitely. What is more necessary therefore is to get rid of the qualities i.e. the vices for it is this which will stop the occurrence of the evil acts. This is the reason why al-Ghazālī and other ṣūfīs so strongly emphasize the task of purification. A philosopher, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Ṣadr, also emphasized the removal of bad dispositions from the soul in order that evil deeds may not happen,<sup>2</sup> and this idea in al-Ghazālī's opinion he too, from the ṣūfīs. The Shāfi'ī's emphasis upon it is less than upon the acts. By thus linking the inward purification with the avoidance of the outward acts, al-Ghazālī combines ṣūfism with the Shāfi'ī. This link is central in his ethics and it is made explicit in many passages,<sup>3</sup> one of which may be quoted as follows:—

"The acts of these members develop only through the qualities of the soul. If, then, you want to guard your members, you must purify your soul, that is, be inwardly pious and not merely outwardly. The soul.....whose soundness leads to the soundness of the whole body; so see to its soundness in order that thereby your members may be saved."<sup>4</sup>

Purification on the part of a novice should follow after self-training in the good acts related to the outward self (ẓāhir)<sup>5</sup> but precede the beautification of the soul with the mystical virtues to be discussed in the next chapter. The root vices form obstacles (ʿaḳabāt)<sup>6</sup> on the path to God and until these have been removed, it is impossible to traverse the stages of the way, i.e., to acquire the mystical qualities. With the removal of the vices, the soul becomes fit to receive the mystical virtues. A similar view was also held by a philosopher, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Ṣadr, who wrote: "They (the virtues) are not achieved by us until we have purified our

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1. Ibid, pp. 101, 237.  
for the effect of good  
and evil acts on the  
soul, cf. R.A. Rashdell,  
"Religious Values in al-  
Ghazālī's Works," ibid., 1936, p. 119.

2. Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Ṣadr, pp. 213-14.  
3. I.D., III, 145; B.H., p. 143  
4. B.H., p. 143  
5. For order between training in  
outward and inward acts see infra pp. 246-47  
6. I.D., III, 253; K.S., p. 425



soul's wicked bodily passions and their vile beastly lusts".<sup>1</sup> He differs from al-Ghazālī in that the virtues about which he is speaking are not the mystical virtues. Indeed al-Ghazālī's teaching concerning their order in effecting purification is sūfistic in nature. This order is expressed in many of his works;<sup>2</sup> a passage from the Ihyā', runs thus:

"If you are desirous of the hereafter, seeking salvation and running away from eternal damnation, pursue the science of the soul's diseases and their remedies.... which will lead you to the praiseworthy 'stations'.... because no sooner is the soul purged from what is blameworthy than it is filled with that which is praiseworthy just as the soil where all kinds of plants and flowers would grow as soon as the grass is weeded out - unless the weeds are removed neither plants nor flowers would grow."<sup>3</sup>

The method prescribed by al-Ghazālī for getting rid of these vices is the one summarily described in the preceding chapter. Its elements are knowledge and action which need to be combined for the complete cure of a vice: sometimes, however, a third element, patience, is added, but on analysis it is found to be an aspect of the element of action.<sup>4</sup> The concepts of a spiritual director (shaykh, pīr) to assist the disciples in the purification; of gradual progress in training; of resorting, where necessary, to the technique already mentioned; and of stopping the training just after the mean is achieved in the case of those vices which are deviations from it - these have all been retained and consistently applied. Since the remedy of a vice by means of the element of action consists in performing these acts which are opposite to the acts caused by it, and since habit-formation in the opposite acts is also a means of acquiring a virtue, al-Ghazālī's description of the removal of a vice indirectly involves the description of the acquisition of a virtue.

Each vice is discussed by al-Ghazālī in its three main aspects, namely, its true nature (ḥaqīqa), the reason why it is termed a vice, and the specific way in which it can be remedied: his mention of the evils (āfāt) of a vice and its condemnation

1. Tahdhīb, p. 10

2. J.Q., p.25; A.W., p.66

3. I.D., I, 34.

4. I.D., III, 210, 173; K.S., p.520



(dham) by quoting Qur'ānic verses and prophetic traditions and the sayings of saints and sūfīs is related to the last two aspects. Only the essential points in each of these three aspects need be discussed in the present study. Al-Ghazālī regards the root vices as forming an ascending scale beginning with greed in food and ending with pride and conceit. He points out the link existing between the ten vices for it is necessary to know this in self-training. In the present study, this link is mentioned and an effort is made to suggest, where possible, the main source of sources of al-Ghazālī's view on every root vice.

Greed in food

Greed (sharāh) in food is the harmful quality which the novice should get rid of first since all evil desires originate from satiety.<sup>1</sup> Desire for food is natural in man and its aim is to ensure bodily health so that it may be a means to happiness. It is only the moderate satisfaction of this desire that is useful to this end. Excess and deficiency in it are both harmful, although it is the excess which is meant by al-Ghazālī in calling this desire a 'destructive' quality. They are harmful in the sense that they are bars to the two primary means of happiness, i.e. knowledge and action; satiety makes the limbs too heavy for them; the pain of hunger also occupies the mind with thought of food; but the man who takes a moderate quantity of food feels light and at the same time gets strength for them; free from pain of hunger and heaviness of stomach he "forgets his stomach"; such a state is conducive to knowledge and actions. For this reason the mean (wast) in desire for food is called the source of all good.<sup>2</sup> The virtue which appears from it is temperance (ṣiffa). This reason for the mean in this desire is similar to that given by al-Makki.<sup>3</sup> It also agrees to some extent with the reason given by Miskawāh.<sup>4</sup> Like the former,<sup>5</sup> al-Ghazālī gives another reason for it, namely, to resemble the angel and thus to draw near

1. K.S., pp. 455, 451-52.

2. Ibid., pp. 41, 51, 52, 463; B.H., p. 139

3. Ṣūt, II, p. 347

4. Fahdhīb, pp. 102-103

5. Ṣūt, III, 352.

to God: the angels are free from this desire; man cannot be free from it but by observing the mean he becomes, as it were, free and thus like them.

The mean in satisfying desire for food is impossible to observe without appropriate training for it. Training needs to be given not in the mean but in a point very near to the extreme of deficiency since this desire is at the extreme of excess in all men. This training in deficiency in order to achieve the mean is a philosophic idea but the details of it are mystical having their parallel in al-Makkī. Training, al-Ghazālī says, should be given in *forā* matters. The first is to take only lawful food for this has great effect in enlightening the soul, whereas unlawful food darkens it; these effects stem from the eater's belief in or awareness of the food being lawful or otherwise.<sup>1</sup> Unlawful food or drink is not recommended by al-Ghazālī under any circumstances because of its harm to the soul for which it is prohibited by the Sharī'a. He condemns Avicenna's view that one can drink wine as a tonic or medicine but not for pleasure.<sup>2</sup> Ar-Rāzī regards wine<sup>3</sup> as a necessity in order to dispel anxiety and to create, where necessary, liveliness, courage, impetuosity and recklessness.<sup>3</sup> Al-Ghazālī mentions four grades of *dety* in regard to food. The first is to avoid unlawful food; a higher grade is to avoid what is doubtful; a still higher is to avoid that lawful food which may lead to the unlawful. The highest grade is to confine oneself to that amount of lawful food which is needed to give strength for action since seeking more than this sometimes causes sin.<sup>4</sup>

The second is training in the quantity of food to be taken. It has four grades in any one of which the novice may train himself. Men at the highest grade eat as much as is needed for sustenance; this is less than ten mouthfuls. Men at the second grade eat as much as fills one third of the capacity of his

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1. A.D., pp. 63, 67. 2. M.D., p.113; cf. Avicenna, *Akhlaq*, p.155  
 3. *At-Tibb ar-Rūhānī* in *Opera Philosophica* I, pp.72-74; *As-Sifa al-Falṣafiyya* in *Ibid*, p.110. 4. A.D., pp. 65-67.

stomach. At the third grade nearly two thirds of the capacity of the stomach is filled with food. A little more than this is extravagance (isrāf). To specify the exact quantity of food, al-Ghazālī admits, is impossible, for it varies with the variation in man's age, physical condition and activities. The basic idea he says, is that one should not eat unless one is truly hungry. Signs of true hunger are mentioned by him as by al-Makkī.<sup>1</sup>

The third is training in the length of time that should elapse before taking the fixed quantity of food. There are three grades of this. The highest grade is not to eat anything during three days or more. At a lower grade one does not eat anything during two days. The lowest grade is to eat once in twenty-four hours; more than this is extravagance. The fourth is training in the type of food and condiment. These should be of very inferior kinds. Desire for <sup>a</sup>tasty food must be restrained for such food creates pride, hardness of mind, love of this world and forgetfulness of the next and sometimes its acquisition leads to sin. At the highest grade of training a novice is required to be content with bread only. If this is too <sup>4</sup>vigorous for him he should at least keep from some kinds of permissible food and drink for to take all kinds is extravagance.<sup>2</sup>

This rigorous training in four aspects of food is only recommended for acquiring ability to observe the mean in eating. It is to be stopped after the ability has been acquired,<sup>3</sup> i.e. after the novice is able to be content with that amount of food which causes him to feel neither <sup>he</sup>avidness of stomach nor pain of hunger and to observe the mean in types of food and condiment. The mean in their types is also described by al-Ghazālī as by al-Makkī: constant eating of meat and other desirable things is extravagance; total abandonment of them is a defect; the mean (wast) between the two is commendable; to show what this mean <sup>4</sup>is like al-Ghazālī quotes Caliph 'Umar's advice to his son - take bread and meat

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1. I.D., III, 77-78; K.S., pp. 458-59; cf. Qūt, II, 343.

2. I.D., III, 78-82; K.S., pp. 460-63

3. K.S., pp. 463-65.

one day, bread and milk the following day.... then bread and salt and then bread only.<sup>1</sup> The underlying idea here is that continuity in meat and rich food causes hardening of mind; their total forsaking creates malnutrition; but the mean is free from both evils. Al-Ghazālī believes that to keep to the right mean in eating is only possible for the prophets and the most devout; others are unable to do this and are, therefore, required to undertake training throughout their lives.<sup>2</sup>

### Excess in sex

Excess in desire for sexual intercourse is the second destructive quality of man. It leads him to such acts as are harmful to his religious and worldly life.<sup>3</sup> Sexual desire is implanted in man for the good purpose of propagation of the human species and so it is not reprehensible in itself; what is reprehensible is its excess or deficiency; when it is at the state of the mean (wasṭ) between these two extremes, the virtue of temperance ('iffa) is achieved. In this state it obeys the dictates of reason and the Sharī'a in its arousal and appeasement. Al-Ghazālī states their dictates in regard to sex. The Sharī'a, he says, permits the gratification of sex only with the married woman and the slave woman (jawārī); sexual activity with any other person is regarded as vile. Reason does not prescribe indiscriminate enjoyment. The mean in sex thus is enjoyment of such sexual intercourse without over-indulgence.<sup>4</sup> Deficiency in it means either impotence or such weakness as makes moderate enjoyment impossible. This is bad because it fails to fulfil God's purpose of creating the sex drive in man. Although bad it is not what al-Ghazālī means by sex when he calls it a destructive quality since its harm is not great enough to lead its possessor to perdition; it is the excessive sex urge that he means by that term.

Excess in the sex urge overpowers reason and thus leads to

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1. I.D., III, 85; cf. Qūt, II, 359, 355.

2. E.S., pp. 463-65; cf. Ibid, p.313. 3. E.D., III, 85-86.

4. Ibid, p.86, 87.



adultery and other mortal sins which, besides being social crimes, affect the soul very badly. Even if it does not cause the committal<sup>1</sup> of such sins it causes too much permissible sexual activity which becomes a bar to the primary means of happiness, i.e. knowledge and action.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes it leads to passionate love ('ishq); those who succumb to it are regarded by al-Ghazālī as having gone astray. Ignorant of the purpose of sex desire, they surpass the lower animals in uncontrollable lust. Their enslavement to this desire increases and their reason, instead of ruling sexual desire, becomes not only ruled by it but it actively engages in its service! Besides the mortal sins excess in the sex urge also causes venial sins such as lustful thoughts, looking upon the opposite sex, touching and kissing. These are wrong because these sometimes lead to adultery and other mortal sins.<sup>2</sup>

But moderation in sex is often free from all sorts of harm. It does not fail to fulfil God's purpose of implanting the sex urge in man, nor does it cause outward sin or inward thought of the opposite sex, nor is it a bar to the primary means of happiness. Its possessor<sup>3</sup> has, as it were, no sex desire and is thus free from attachment to an aspect of the world - a freedom necessary for salvation. Al-Ghazālī does not speak of the preservation of bodily health as the purpose of the mean in sex; it is the philosopher-physician ar-Rāzī who emphasized the control of sex for this purpose.<sup>3</sup> Since excessive sex urge predominates in man al-Ghazālī mentions the methods of reducing it to the state of the mean. These are hunger, marriage and engagement in some business which only prevents the arousal of the desire by diverting the mind from thought about the opposite sex. Hunger and marriage were suggested by the Prophet and to them al-Ghazālī adds the third means.<sup>4</sup>

In connection with marriage as a means of reducing hunger al-Ghazālī, like al-'akkī, discusses the problem of the disciple's

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1. I.D., III, 86.      2. Ibid, pp. 87-88, 91,  
 3. Tibb, pp. 75, 25.      4. I.D., III, 87, 89; K.S., pp. 855-56.



marriage. He says that although wife and children are useful to man in preparing for happiness, these are a few ways in which they are harmful to him. They drag back to the world a disciple who ~~was~~ just begun to travel the path to God - a reason why al-Ghazālī himself was away from his family for ten long years of his retirement. His aim is to acquire love of God and intimacy with him, but intimacy with his wife prevents the achievement of this aim. He should therefore adopt celibacy until he is strong in gnosis (ma'rifa) and weaken his sex urge by prolonged hunger and continued fast. If by these means it is weakened to the extent that he is able to guard against adultery but not against lustfully looking upon strange women (ajnabiyya) and handsome boys, it is better for him to weaken his sex urge by resorting to marriage even though he is not yet strong in gnosis, for the inability to guard against looking makes him unable to guard the mind from thinking about sex, in which case treading the path with all devotion becomes impossible. Looking, moreover, is the first step towards fornication and is the greatest of all the venial sins. If he can control his looks and thoughts, celibacy is better as long as he is not strong in gnosis. Even after the attainment of perfection some mystics such as Rābi'a of Basra and others preferred celibacy despite knowing full well that marriage is a sunna of the Prophet. Al-Ghazālī explains this by saying that anything which is a barrier between man and God even though slightly is regarded by the most devout as imperfection and the family is such a bar! He himself experienced some harm of family when he was in solitude which he adopted after he had returned home from ten years' retirement.<sup>2</sup>

### Excessive Speech

The desire for excessive speech (sharāh al-kalām) is the third harmful quality of man. It has many forms from which acts proceed through the tongue<sup>3</sup> and so these acts are called by al-Ghazālī the evils of the tongue. These acts affect the soul because of the already mentioned relationship between it and the body; thus a vile speech and a lie darken the soul and trouble

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1. I.D., III, 87, 89-99. All these views of al-Ghazālī are more or less similar to those of al-Makkī; see Qūt, II, 489-528 especially pp. 490, 492-495 line 24, 502, 507, 511, 528-29. 2. M.D., p. 60. 3. K.S., p. 471

its balance.<sup>1</sup> Such a soul will not be able to enjoy fully the vision of God in the future life.<sup>2</sup> Besides affecting the soul most of these acts results in paining one's fellow men and harming them as well as oneself in various ways.<sup>3</sup> For these reasons the tongue is regarded by al-Ghazālī as the chief cause of man's destruction in this life and the next.<sup>4</sup>

The number of the evils of the tongue is not the same in al-Ghazālī's works dealing with them. In the Ihyā' they are enumerated as twenty, in the Kimīyā' as fifteen and in the Bidāya as eight. In the second work sometimes two acts are treated under one name and a few acts are omitted altogether. In the last work only those evils are discussed which predominate in the tongue, and the same is done in the Arba'īn where they are mentioned as twenty, out of which only five are discussed on that account.<sup>5</sup> Some of these acts are considered by al-Ghazālī as lighter (akhaff) and others as graver (aghlaz) and his treatment of them proceeds from the former to the latter.<sup>6</sup> Examples of the acts of the first group are speaking about what does not concern one and superfluous talk (fudl); these are no sins but only waste of time and thus cause imperfection.<sup>7</sup> Avoidance of such light evils is appropriate to the especial few, while all men are required to abjure the graver evils. Among these latter some are more harmful than others and these need to be discussed here.

#### Cursing

Cursing (la'n) anything which God created - man, animal or object - is regarded by al-Ghazālī as an evil act of the tongue. Cursing it means to drive it away from God's mercy, to remove it to a distance from Him (ibād). Since it is unknown

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1. A.D., p. 106. 2. K.S., pp.471-72. 3. Ibid, p.476; I.D., III, 46  
 4. B.H., n.138. 5. A.D., pp.107-08. 6. I.D., III, n.96.  
 7. Ibid, pp.93,99; K.S., p.476

whether or not God has driven or will drive away any being from His compassion and since it is exclusively His concern, to curse amounts to interference in divine affairs and speaking about the unknown. But these are not involved in cursing someone for possessing those attributes which drive one away from God's mercy. These are infidelity, heresy, wickedness, (fiṣq). There are three grades in cursing those who have these attributes. The first is to curse them generally, e.g. 'may God curse the infidels, the heretics and the wicked!' The second is to curse them in a less general way, e.g. 'may God curse the fire worshippers, the Kharijites and the adulterers.' There is nothing wrong in these two grades of cursing. The third grade is to curse them individually, e.g. 'may God curse this infidel, this heretic and this wicked man.'<sup>1</sup>

This grade of cursing is discussed by al-Ghazālī in some detail. He says that if it is known from Shari'a evidence that an individual is accursed by God there is nothing wrong in cursing him. So one can curse such people as abu-Jahl, Faraw, Nimrud and others who are known from the Shari'a to have died as infidels. But it is wrong to curse an individual whose fate is unknown; thus a particular infidel, a heretic or a wicked man must not be cursed because it is possible that this infidel may die in that faith, the heretic may reject heresy and the wicked man may repent. If cursing an individual who deserves it pains another, it should be avoided, for cursing yields no benefit whereas hurting is a mortal sin. It is wrong to curse Yazid for Imam Husayn's murder at Karbala since there is no clear evidence that he himself killed or ordered to kill the Imam. To say 'may God curse him who killed or ordered the killing' is also wrong for it is possible that he died repentant in which case he is not accursed. It is, however, right to say this with the addition 'if he died unrepentant' for in this case he is deprived of God's mercy because a mortal sin like

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1. Ibid., pp. 106-107

murder is unforgiveable without repentance. Thus as a sūfī al-Ghazālī is very cautious in regard to cursing. He urges man to avoid it even in the right situation for no benefit accrues from it. Instead of employing the tongue in cursing one should keep it engaged in praise of God or at least inactive. It should also be restrained from praying to God for anyone's harm even though he is an oppressor for this approaches cursing!<sup>1</sup>

False Promises

Making false promises (al-wa'd al-lādhīb) is another evil act of the tongue. It proceeds from the vice of hypocrisy (nifāq) in the soul. Man hastens to make promises for this is easy but once they are made the carnal soul (nafs) provokes him not to keep them owing to the difficulties involved in them; so he should be very cautious in the beginning. Breaking a promise is a sin when it is made with the resolve to break it or when it is made with the determination of fulfilment but is later broken because of the provocation of the carnal soul. It is however, not a sin when a promise is made with the resolve to keep it but is later broken by some compulsion. In support of all these ideas al-Ghazālī quotes relevant Traditions.<sup>2</sup>

Lying

Falsehood (kidhb) in a speech and in oath is one of the greater evils of the tongue. It proceeds from the quality of hypocrisy in the soul. Its evil al-Ghazālī indicates in terms of its harms to the speaker's soul and also to other people: he believes that every lie produces an evil effect on the soul which he metaphorically described as 'unevenness',<sup>3</sup> a dark spot,<sup>4</sup> and a change of form;<sup>5</sup> even falsehood in imagination and inner utterance of the soul is not free from this effect.<sup>6</sup> In lying a person is kept ignorant of the actual fact, and this, besides being itself a harm to him, causes him other harms; sometimes, however, its harms are less than the benefits of informing him

1. Ibid, pp. 107-09. 2. Ibid, pp. 114-16; A.S., pp.483-84

3. I.D., III, 118; A.S., p. 484. 4. I.D., III, 117

5. Ibid; A.S., p. 486. 6. I.D., pp. 103-09; A.S., pp.471-2.



of the fact and in such situations lying is right provided it is done with a sense of hatred and a clear consciousness of its good motive. Such a lie creates no evil effect on the soul.<sup>1</sup>

The unusual circumstances in which lying is right are discussed by al-Ghazālī in close relation with Tradition.. He says that if the end of a speech is good in the Sharī'a and if it can only be achieved by lying, it is right to tell a lie. This rightness has two forms - necessity and permissibility. If the good end is something permissible in the Sharī'a lying for it is permissible, and if it is necessary lying is also necessary. Thus to tell a lie in order to save life is necessary, and to have advantage in war, to remove enmity and to please a wife is permissible only when these are impossible without it.<sup>2</sup> It is also permissible in the cases resembling these in meaning e.g. to protect property from an oppressor, to preserve self-respect or others' respect, to please his wife and so on. In all these cases lying is right because the harm it does is less than the harm done by truth according to the Sharī'a. Where it is difficult to determine the degree of harm, truth is to be spoken. Since mistakes are often made in determining the degree of harm, falsehood should be avoided as far as possible even in those situations where its harm appears less. It is commendable to avoid a permissible lie if it concerns one's own benefit, but if it concerns other's benefit it should not be avoided.<sup>3</sup>

Even in the cases where a lie is necessary or permissible the most virtuous avoid it by resorting to tarīd as far as possible. Tarīd is to speak in such a way that the speaker is literally truthful but the person addressed understands otherwise than the actual fact. Where lying is wrong tarīd is also wrong though its wrongness is less serious. It is right to adopt tarīd for a light motive like pleasing someone, by joking with him. Lying for this motive is wrong if it causes pain to anyone or involves backbiting; if it does not involve these, it is a minor sin. To say for emphasis 'I have told you this a

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1. K.S., p.486; I.D., III, 119. 2. I.D., III, 119

3. Ibid, p.120



hundredtimes' is not a lie if it was told more than once. Falsely to deny appetite when one is requested to join a meal is wrong if there is no good motive for denial; in the event of a motive it is better to deny by adopting tarīd.<sup>1</sup>

All these are al-Ghazālī's views concerning truth and falsehood in speech with one's fellowmen. In this discussion of the mystical virtue of truthfulness he also speaks of truth and falsehood in one's converse with God. He says that when a devotee utters in his ritual prayer 'I turned my face towards Him who created....', his mind must be wholly directed towards God if he is to be true in this utterance. In addressing Him, sayin, 'Thee we worship' most people are false since they follow their passions and whoever follows passions is a worshipper of them and not of God. Every converse with Him is false if it does not agree with the devotee's mental state. Only the most devout can be safe from this kind of lie.<sup>2</sup>

#### Slandering

Slandering (namāna) is among the greater evils of the tongue.<sup>3</sup> It is usually defined as one's relating to another any talk made about him by a third man. This definition is too narrow according to al-Ghazālī. He defines slandering as disclosing any such matter whose disclosure is disliked by the person to whom it is disclosed or by the one of whom it is disclosed or by any other person; it is all the same whether the disclosure is verbal or in writing or by hint and indication and whether what is disclosed is speech or action and whether it is an imperfection or not; if it is an imperfection disclosing it is slandering and backbiting at once. The true meaning of slender, then, is to disclose any secret whose disclosure is disliked. Any secrets of any person should be kept as such except when its disclosure benefits someone or prevents a sin. An act of stealing, for instance, should be disclosed but ones hiding one's own property from others should not be reported. The motive of slandering is to harm the one whose secret is disclosed or to express love of him to whom it is disclosed or to find pleasure by talking

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1. Ibid, II, 121-23; I.I., pp. 487-89.

2. I.I., IV, 332. 3. Ibid, III, 137

and investigating into a vain thing.<sup>1</sup>

al-Ghazālī does not mention any remedy for slandering. However, his stating of its causes, its harm and the task of a person to whom a secret is disclosed suggests that here too he conceives of remedy by means of knowledge and action.. Removal of the causes entails the removal of desire for slandering. Knowledge of its harm especially in the future life is discussed by al-Ghazālī in detail.<sup>2</sup> The action of the man to whom a secret is revealed is to disbelieve the slanderer, to prohibit him from this sin, to make him realize its harm to hate him and to regard him as an enemy. Such a dealing with him will deter him from committing this sin.<sup>3</sup>

#### Backbiting

Backbiting (ghiba) is the greatest of all the evils of the tongue.<sup>4</sup> To support this contention al-Ghazālī quotes the Tradition in which it is said to be more serious than thirty adulteries.<sup>5</sup> He defines it as one's mentioning another person's imperfections which he dislikes when aware of it. Imperfection may be in body, lineage, character, work, speech, religious affairs and worldly matters such as dress, house and so on. Imperfections in the body are its being short, tall, black or any other of its qualities whose mention by others is disliked by him. Imperfections in lineage are such as one's father being a sinner, mean etc. Imperfections in character are vices like miserliness, cowardice, pride and so on. Imperfections in religious matters are stealing, lying, betraying the trust, prostrating defectively and the like. Imperfections in dress are its being dirty, short, too long etc. Imperfections in worldly matters are rudeness, eating too much, oversleeping, sitting in improper places and so on. Each kind of imperfection is discussed by al-Ghazālī in great detail. He rejects the view that one's mentioning another's imperfection in religious matters or those imperfections which are truly present in him is not backbiting. According to him, backbiting consists in an individual's mentioning another by any thing which is likely to hurt

1. Ibid

2. Ibid, pp. 134-35, 136-37.

3. Ibid, p. 135. 4. Ibid, pp. 129, 130; K.S. p. 493.

5. B.H., p. 134

his feelings although what is mentioned of him is entirely true. To mention a defect not present in him is a lie (bantān) and not backbiting. These ideas al-Ḥazālī supports by conditions and by appeal to the conscience of the Muslim community (Ijmā' al-umma).<sup>1</sup>

Backbiting is not limited to what is done by speech only; on the contrary, it includes making one aware of another's imperfection by any means whether speech, writing, imitation, indication by the hand, the eyebrows, and so on. To mention in a book a defect in a particular person's statement is backbiting except when there is good reason for it. But to put his defect in a sentence such as 'someone says such and such' is not backbiting for in backbiting a particular person's defect is mentioned be he alive or dead. To say 'some of those whom we met yesterday are ill-tempered' is backbiting if listeners can recognize the people referred to by 'one'. To speak ill of others in the guise of invocation is the worst form of backbiting. An example of this is that when a man is mentioned to another, the latter sometimes says 'we seek protection from God against little shame'; in the guise of invocation he wants to say that this man is shameless; this is both hypocrisy and backbiting at once. To believe in a backbiter is included in backbiting. To be silent at backbiting is to take part in it except when one is unable to oppose it or leave the place of it; when compelled to be silent one must mentally dislike it.<sup>2</sup>

Backbiting with the mind is to imagine evil (sū' az-zann) of someone which is also a sin. It is to categorize him as evil and is distinguished from 'passing thoughts' and 'inner utterance' of the soul' and also from doubt; these are not sin. Its sign is change in mental attitude towards him or occurrence of bodily acts caused by it. Convicting an individual of evil is right only when it is witnessed or known with clear proof. This is also right relying upon an upright man ('adūl)'s information. If, however, there is enmity between them his report is to be taken as neither

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1. I.Ḍ., III, pp. 124-126    2. Ibid, pp. 126-127.

true nor false. A consequence of imagining evil is saying (tajassus) for confirmation; this is also a sin for this is an effort to disclose what God kept in secret about His creature.<sup>1</sup>

Mentioning any evil or imperfection of a particular person is of course not wrong if it is made for such good end as cannot otherwise be fulfilled. Such ends are six which are to seek justice or help from an authority, to remove the evil by informing those able to remove it, to seek legal opinion about it from a judge and to caution others against it. To mention a man by his familiar surname expressive of his defect is not backbiting. Nor is it backbiting to mention only that much of a wicked man's imperfection which he himself makes public, for he is not pained by it, nor does such a man deserve any respect from others.<sup>2</sup>

Backbiting can be remedied in two ways one of which consists of knowledge and action. Knowledge is concerning its harm in the future life which is discussed by al-Chazālī in detail.<sup>3</sup> Action is to investigate into one's own faults and, on finding any in himself, to engage in removing it, to feel ashamed of blaming others without blaming himself and to realise that others are like him in being <sup>un-</sup>able to be free <sup>from</sup> defects. If no fault is found in himself, he should guard against being defiled by the greatest fault, backbiting.<sup>4</sup> The other way consists in removing the causes of backbiting by means of knowledge. Its causes are anger, malice and seeking the pleasure of friends and associates. Friends discuss evil of someone; sometimes one of them, thinking that to forbid them or to leave them in order to escape from this vice will displease them, co-operates in their backbiting. The remedy for this is to realise its foolishness inasmuch as it is disobeying God's order to please His creatures. A fourth cause of backbiting someone is to make him unreliable to an authority; firm belief in the harm of backbiting in the future life can check

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1. Ibid, pp. 130-32. 2. Ibid, 132-33; K.S., pp. 495-96.  
3. I.D., III, 129, 123-25. 4. Ibid, p. 129



this bad habit. Finally, man sometimes speaks ill of another in order to justify its presence in himself. Realisation of how ridiculous it is to defend oneself by an evil-doer's behaviour will prevent him from this sin.<sup>1</sup>

### Anger, Rancour and Envy

#### Anger

Strong anger (shiddat al-ghadab) is a disease of the soul. It does very great harm for it causes many vices and evil acts. Its harm was also emphasized by Miskawayh who, unlike al-Ghazālī regarded it as the most serious of the spiritual diseases. Anger itself is not a reprehensible faculty of the soul; it is implanted in it to repel anything destructive and it is useful if it is moderate (mu'tadil) and not excessive or deficient.<sup>2</sup> These two extremes are bad because of their evil consequences. Al-Ghazālī discusses in detail the nature of anger, its degrees and the vices and evil acts proceeding from them and his discussion is to some extent similar to that of Miskawayh.<sup>3</sup> A very harmful result of deficient anger is that it makes self-training impossible, for in training evil desires need to be opposed which can only be effected by anger against them. Holy war (jihād) and prohibiting others from wrong doing are also impossible when anger is deficient.<sup>4</sup> The signs of such anger are lack of disapproval of wrong doing, and toleration of humiliation and injustice in inappropriate situations.<sup>5</sup> Excessive anger is that which crosses the limit set by reason and the Shari'ah. It overpowers reason and consequently thought and insight become inactive. Its sign is that it leads its possessor to recklessness and wrong-doing.<sup>6</sup>

Moderation in anger is that which is excited or appeased in the right situations determined by reason and the Shari'ah. This is commendable since this is the mean (wasṭ) praised by the

prophet and the right path which God ordered men to follow.<sup>7</sup> The right situations and the right measure of anger al-Ghazālī describes

1. Ibid, 129-30;

2. Ibid, p.145

3. Ibid, p. 145

4. Ibid, p.145

5. Ibid, p. 146

6. Ibid,

7. Ibid.



by classifying things into three groups. The first consists of those which are essentials to all people, e.g. food, clothes, shelter and good health. Interference with these basic needs must cause anger. The extent of necessity differs from person to person. The second group includes those things which are essential for some people only, e.g. books, tools, etc. It is also necessary to be angry when there is interference with such things. The aim of training in anger in the case of these two groups is to acquire ability to control it so that one can do only what is good to reason and the Sharī'a. (The Prophet used to be angry for right and religious causes but never did anything wrong). It is also to weaken it in which case patience will not be too difficult. The third group includes those things which are non-essential for everyone e.g. more than the necessary measure of food, wealth, influence etc. Interference with these needs not cause anger. The aim of self-training here is to achieve complete freedom from anger or, at least to prevent its resulting actions. The former is relevant to the most devout who know the purpose of worldly things and so do not love those which are superfluous, and since they do not love them anger for them is never aroused.<sup>1</sup>

In regard to the remedy for anger al-Ghazālī says that it should be increased if deficient<sup>2</sup> but he does not mention by what means this should be done. Miskawayh, however, pointed out several ways of it.<sup>3</sup> Al-Ghazālī discusses only the ways of reducing anger. In one way anger can be repressed when excited and in another its strength can be reduced so that it obeys reason and the Sharī'a. The former method consists of knowledge and action. Knowledge is concerning the reward of repressing anger, and the punishment of wrongly satisfying it in the future life,<sup>4</sup> the ugliness of the angry man's appearance and the resemblance of his character with that of the dog and other ferocious animals. Action is to seek help from God by uttering, 'I seek protection with God from the driven devil' for he overtakes the angry man. If anger is not appeased by this,

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1. Ibid, 146-49

2. A.D., p. 119

3. Tahdhib, pp. 170-77

4. I.D., III, 152-55

he should sit down if standing and lie down if sitting for being close to the soil creates a sense of self-abasement by which vain glory, a cause of anger, is removed; to sit and to lie down moreover, give rest which reduces the heat of his anger. If all these are ineffective, he should wash his hands and face or the entire body with cold water for by this his bodily heat will be lessened.<sup>1</sup> Since anger leads to rancour and envy<sup>2</sup> al-Ghazālī goes on to discuss these; he deals with rancour first for the reason already mentioned.

#### Rancour

Rancour (hied) is looked upon by al-Ghazālī as a serious vice. It was also regarded as a vice by al-uhāsibī<sup>3</sup> who, however, did not discuss it. Al-Ghazālī discusses it<sup>4</sup> as well as its relevant virtues. According to him rancour is caused by anger: when the repression of anger is indispensable on account of one's inability to satisfy it at the moment, it returns to the soul, is congested and becomes rancour. Rancour is that state of mind in which the enmity of an angry man cleaves persistently to his soul. Al-Ghazālī enumerates eight<sup>5</sup> <sup>evils</sup> produced by rancour of which some are vices and others are wrong acts. All of these are 'destructive of religion' and unlawful.<sup>5</sup> Among them envy and joy at another's misfortune (shamēta) necessarily accompany anger.<sup>6</sup> At the lowest grade of rancour these eight evils are not produced, but the mind is burdened with some enmity against another so that one ceases to favour him, to stand beside him in his need, to associate with him and to encourage him to good. This attitude lowers his grades in virtues. Al-Ghazālī mentions two ideal ways of behaviour towards him with whom one is angry. The first is to give him his due (haqq) fully, neither more nor less. This is justice and is appropriate to the pious. To treat him with injustice and oppression is a vicious conduct. The second way is to forgive him, to do good to him and to strengthen relationship with him. This is excellence and is appropriate to the most virtuous.<sup>7</sup>

1. Ibid, pp. 147-52.

2. A.D., v. 118

3. Liḡya, p. 310.

4. In the Arbaʿīn, however, the vice

of rancour is not discussed. 5. I.D., p. 512

6. I.D., III, 103.

7. Ibid, p. 157.

Thus forgiveness ('afw) is a virtue appropriate to the most devout. It is an attribute of God and of His Apostle who never took revenge except when God's rights were violated. Forgiveness is distinguished by al-Ghazālī from clemency and repression of anger<sup>and</sup> is defined as obtaining a right like that of retaliation (qisās) or indemnity and then<sup>^</sup> willingly forsaking it. This is highly commendable.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, forgiveness stems from the root virtue of courage. In the list of virtues, however, al-Ghazālī did not mention it, but he certainly included it in those sub-virtues of courage which he left unmentioned saying "and the like"<sup>2</sup>

In the discussion of rancour one of the consequences of its smallest degree by which man's grade in religion is slightly lowered is mentioned as ceasing to be lenient towards him who excites one's rancour. The virtue of leniency (riḥ) is strongly emphasized in the Shari'ah and al-Ghazālī discusses it in a separate section. In the list of virtues, however, he did not mention it. Its opposite is severity which is condemnable. Severity is caused by anger and at times by greed since these cloud a man's mind preventing him from considering his right course and to remain steadfast (thābit) in it. Leniency results from a state of the soul in which the faculties of anger and desire are controlled and at equilibrium. It is not, however, good in all circumstances. Nor is severity bad in all situations; each is commendable in its proper place. This is the mean (wasṭ). The proper cases of severity and leniency will be determined by perfect insight. Men of imperfect insight and those faced with difficulty in deciding about the nature of a particular case should incline to leniency for this is good in most situations. The Shari'ah as a determining factor of the mean is omitted here. The reason is that in the Shari'ah leniency is so much praised that it appears to be good in all cases and hence in distinguishing between the situations of severity and leniency one cannot get help from it. The Shari'ah

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1. Ibid, 156, 159.

2. Ibid, p.47

praised leniency greatly because by nature men tend to be severe and because leniency in what is good in most cases.<sup>1</sup> After dealing with rancour and the virtues and vices related to it, al-Ghazālī treats of the vice of envy.

#### envy

Envy (hasad) is a great vice.<sup>2</sup> It is greater than rancour and is treated in all al-Ghazālī's works dealing with vices, but rancour is discussed only in his two major works. Envy is even regarded as one of the three vices "which are both destructive in themselves and the roots of all other evil dispositions."<sup>3</sup> In considering envy worse than rancour he agrees with al-uhāsibī who dealt with envy in great detail regarding it as a serious vice but only mentioned rancour as a cause of it.<sup>4</sup> He also agrees with al-uhāsibī in that envy is caused by rancour which is in turn caused by anger. He defines envy as a state of mind in which a man is pained when another person obtains any good and he wants that good taken away from him even though he himself will not obtain any advantage from its removal. This leads to the vice of

1. Ibid, pp.160, 161-62, 187-90; I.S., p. 514, 513-14.

2. I.D., III, 170; I.S., p. 513.

3. I.S., p. 143.

4. Ihya p. 312. al-uhāsibī discussed envy in all its aspects in this work, pp. 305-23. al-Ghazālī also treats of it in detail in his Ihya, III, 162-74 and most of his ideas have their source in al-uhāsibī. However, ʿAllām ʿAlī suggests al-Jāhiz's ʿAḥqāb as the source of most of al-Ghazālī's views on envy. To prove the similarity in their thought he quoted several passages from it and then points out a "great difference between them in two fundamental matters", namely, (a) the manner of presentation (which is literary in al-Jāhiz) so that what is a cause of envy in al-Ghazālī is its consequence in al-Jāhiz and (b) the extent of thought i.e. al-Ghazālī adds many subtle ideas to those of al-Jāhiz. These differences he explained as al-Ghazālī's improvement upon others' views of which he speaks in the introduction to his Ihya; see ʿAllām, "Al-ḥadīth and al-Ghazālī," in ʿAḥqāb, pp.619-33. ʿAllām's suggestion is wrong for several reasons: al-Ghazālī is similarly in thought to al-Jāhiz is far less than to al-uhāsibī; his terminology bears no marks of his studying al-Jāhiz's work, whereas his terminology as well as the manner of presentation often coincide with those of al-uhāsibī; the five-fold improvement of which he speaks in the introduction to his work is upon the ṣūfī works and not upon such works as those by al-Jāhiz as ʿAllām supposed; al-Ghazālī expressed his indebtedness to al-uhāsibī, but there is no evidence of his studying al-Jāhiz.



pleasure in another's misfortune.<sup>1</sup> Every good man possesses is God's gift and another's wish for its removal is his displeasure with God's decree and also an avarice greater than the usual, for a miser is niggardly towards others with his own possessions but an envious man is niggardly towards them with the gifts which come from God's treasury.<sup>2</sup> For the latter reason envy and pleasure at another's misfortune are regarded, in the list of vices and virtues, as resulting from the deviation of the faculty of desire from its mean state to the extreme of excess.<sup>3</sup> Besides being bad in itself envy is also bad because it produces innumerable sins such as slander, murder and so on.<sup>4</sup> It is, however, not wrong if it is for a good which aids its owner in harming others, for here dislike for the good is not because it is a good but because it is a means of corruption.

The soul can only be said to be free from envy when another's weal and woe are equally felt.<sup>5</sup> Since this is naturally impossible in an oppressors case, al-Ghazālī discusses what should be freedom from envy in this situation. He says that by nature man wishes for the removal of good from him who oppressed him and if this wish is so strong that it finds expression through his voluntary acts, it is envy. If its expression is totally restrained and the natural wish present in the mind is not disliked by its owner, then also it is envy, for envy is a quality of the soul and not an outward act. But if with the restraint of its expression there is always a dislike for it, i.e. by his reason he is angry with himself, for having this unavoidable natural wish, it is not envy for by disliking it he has done all that is humanly possible. This view al-Ghazālī and al-Muhāsibī have established after refuting some scholars' opinion that freedom from envy is achieved should the desire for the removal of another's good not be expressed.<sup>6</sup>

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1. I.D., III, 165; cf. Kitāb, pp. 303, 312.

2. E.F., n. 144      3. I.D., III, 47.      4. Ibid, pp. 173, 174.

5. E.H., n. 144      6. I.D., III, 173-74; I.D., pp. 520-21;  
cf. Kitāb, pp. 321-22



Envy is distinguished from emulation (ghibtā) and competition (munāṭasa) since while in envy a man wishes that others should be deprived of good, in emulation he does not so wish; he wishes the persistence of good in them but desires to obtain similar good himself. Emulation may be necessary, permissible and praiseworthy depending upon the nature of the things emulated. Emulation of those forms of religious good which everyone is obliged to acquire e.g. 'faith' prayer etc., is necessary. Emulation of virtuous acts like giving away in good causes is praiseworthy. Emulation for those things whose enjoyment is allowed by the Shari'a is permissible; it is, however, avoided by the mystics since it negates the virtue of asceticism.<sup>1</sup>

In all these ideas al-Ghazālī is following al-Muhāsibī very closely, but he sees in emulation a subtle danger which al-Muhāsibī failed to perceive: if a person fails to obtain a like good to that which he emulates, he will naturally wish the removal of the good from its owner, for his grief is because of his falling short of him and this grief can only be removed when he obtains a similar good or when the good is removed in which case he will be equal to him; since the first alternative has failed, he will naturally resort to the second. Hardly anyone is free from this natural wish. If the desire is such that, should the matter be left to his choice, he will surely remove the good, it is envy, but if the desire is so weak that he will not do so and by his reason he dislikes this inescapable natural desire it is not envy.<sup>2</sup>

The vice of envy can be got rid off in two ways, in one of which its violence can be annulled and in another it can be removed from the soul. The element of knowledge in the first method concerns its harm in this world and the next, to the envious and the fact that envy not only causes no harm to the envied

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1. I.D., pp. 173-74; cf. Ibid, pp. 300, 315, 306-07.

2. I.D., III, 166-7; K.S., pp. 517-18

but benefits him in both worlds. All these al-Ghazālī explains in close similarity to al-Muhāsibī. He adds to al-Muhāsibī's cure by knowledge the element of action which is to do the opposite if the acts proceeding from envy, e.g. humility towards the envied, increase in good to him etc. Perseverance in such acts is very effective in annulling the violence of envy.<sup>2</sup> The other method is to remove the causes of envy which are pride, conceit, enmity, love of influence and greed for wealth. Cure of envy in the first method only will break its violence for the time being but it will recur again should its causes not be removed.<sup>3</sup> Since all its causes are but different aspects of love of the world, al-Ghazālī turns next to discuss this.<sup>4</sup>

#### Love of the world.

Love of the world (hubb ad-dunyā) is regarded by al-Ghazālī as not only a great vice but the vice from which proceed all other vices,<sup>4,5</sup> and hence it is discussed in all his works dealing with them. In the list of virtues and vices it is not mentioned; in the beginning of the kīmīyā<sup>5</sup> the world is discussed only as a part of the introduction to his ethics but while dealing with the root vices he introduces love of the world as a central vice supporting this conception by a tradition in which it is called the fountain-head of every sin and is given a comprehensive discussion. Al-Makkī also quoted this Tradition to emphasize the evil of the world but he discussed the world very briefly in connection with the mystical virtue of asceticism (zuhd) and his views influenced al-Ghazālī to some extent. Philosophers like Raskawayh and al-Windī also spoke about love of the world and their ideas, too, have some influence upon him.

By the world the love of which is a vice al-Ghazālī means the condemnable world (ad-dunyā al-madhūma) which he explains by distinguishing between the world for a man and the world in itself. The world for a man includes all that exists before his death, and his hereafter starts from immediately afterwards. What is before his death is all that in which he has enjoyment, pleasure,

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1. B.H., p. 144; p. 144; cf. Riāya, pp. 315-20

2. I.D., III, 173; K.S., p. 520.

3. I.D., III, 170-73. 4. Ibid, p. 169 5. A.D., p. 171, 140; K.S. p. 521

6. K.S., p. 4

fortune and desire. These are divided into three kinds, of which some are needed for well-being in the hereafter and others not, and it is these latter which form the condemnable world. The first kind<sup>consists</sup> of those which accompany man after death i.e. knowledge and action provided they are acquired for other-worldly purpose. Although they give intense pleasure they do not belong to the condemnable world. The second group includes those which give pleasure in this life but cause misery in the next. They are sins and enjoyment (tana'um) of all the permissible things which are in excess of need (hāja). They belong to the blameworthy world both in meaning and appearance and of them the former is relevant to all people and the latter is especial to the mystics. The third kind<sup>consists</sup> of all that gives pleasure but is an aid to knowledge and action, e.g. legal sexual intercourse with the intention of getting assistance in action from offspring and as much food, clothing and shelter as is necessary for good health needed for knowledge and action. These do not belong to the condemnable world unless they are sought for enjoyment and self-pleasure.<sup>1</sup>

Thus everything which is not necessary for the hereafter is the condemnable world for the seekers after God. It is referred to as passion (hawā) the objects of which al-Ghazālī, like al-Nakī, enumerates by citing Qur'ānic verses.<sup>2</sup> To use more than the necessary amount of the things permitted by the Sharī'a is enjoyment not needed for the hereafter and is therefore avoided by the mystics. The pious, however, may enjoy this but they should carefully guard against committing any sin in its acquisition.<sup>3</sup> Indeed al-Ghazālī states that if all people limited themselves to the necessary or essential and were totally engaged in the pursuit of the hereafter abandoning worldly acts and business, the world-order would be paralyzed making it impossible for 'the few' to tread the path. It is therefore

1. Ibid, p. 163; I.D., III, 190-92.

2. I.D., III, 192, 194; cf. Qūt, I, 498-99.

3. Ibid, p. 191; K.S., p. 530.

~~It is not necessary~~ necessary for the few's sake that most people will turn away from the path and be engaged in worldly affairs. This is the pre-destined will of God.<sup>1</sup> This idea is also to be found in al-Makki who, however, put it very briefly.<sup>2</sup>

In confining themselves to what is needed or essential the few differ among themselves and this difference al-Ghazali explains by means of the doctrine of the mean (wasṭ). He says that the superfluous things to be avoided by the 'few' form the limit of enjoyment; the essentials (darūrāt) i.e. sufficient food, clothing and shelter and a few things which are means to them must be loved by all and form another limit; between these two limits there is the grade of need (hāja) appropriate to "the few" only. This grade has two extremes, one of which approaches the limit of enjoyment and although there is nothing wrong in this extreme (since the grade of need in its entirety is free from being the condemnable world), the mystics should avoid it lest they may pass to the grade of enjoyment. The other extreme approaches the level of essentials and this extreme is not harmful for it is hardly possible to be confined to that level. Between these two extremes there are many means (wasā'it) which are praiseworthy. The more a man deviates to the extreme approaching the limit of the essentials the higher will be his rank. Prophets and saints crossed this extreme to be content with bare essentials.<sup>3</sup> The details of these means can only be known from the Companions' lives for they were on the way of moderation: they did not forsake the world totally but took from it only that much which they needed for religion.<sup>4</sup>

The reason why the few should limit themselves to that which is necessary or essential is that the world is created so that man may prepare for well-being in his eternal life and he can do this when the body is in sound health; for this he needs to take as much food as necessary for strength, as much clothing and shelter as necessary against cold, heat and theft and engage

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1. I.D., II, 97, 98.      2. Qūt, I, 516.  
 3. I.D., III, 192; K.S., p. 530.    4. I.D., III, 199.



in as much arts and business as needed for bare sustenance.

By this means he becomes free from anxious thought about the body and can serve God with all devotion throughout his life.<sup>1</sup> The enjoyment of superfluous things leads to hardening of mind, insolence, heedlessness of religion and numerous sins. Man's relation to worldly things is established through his soul and body. From the love of worldly things such vices as hypocrisy, envy, pride etc. are generated.<sup>2</sup> Through the body a man becomes engaged in various acts and businesses; involvement with one of these leads to many others and consequently the man forgets his place of return and true goal. Even if he does not forget these he fails to prepare for the future life by remembering God and reflecting upon Him, since his mind is always occupied with other matters.<sup>3</sup> At death when he is separated from his beloved world he experiences grief in proportion to the strength of his love.<sup>4</sup> Many of these ideas of al-Ghazālī can be traced in his predecessors' works. In the Junaidh he states that the necessity of severing the soul's attachment to the world in order to live a God-fearing life became clear to him after his study of gūfism.<sup>5</sup> The ideas of necessity and superfluosity and some of the evils of the latter given above are also mentioned, though briefly, by al-Nakī;<sup>6</sup> he, however, did not speak of the higher essential grade. al-Rindī indicates how entanglement with this world causes forgetfulness of the next and the true goal, and a passage from his work is incorporated by al-Ghazālī in his books with slight alteration.<sup>7</sup> Ishaqāh emphasized moderate share of wealth, influence and other worldly goods, but he, too, did not differentiate between the grade of need and that of the essential; his views on the purpose of moderation or need or sufficiency and on the reasons for avoiding the superfluous are similar to those of al-Ghazālī with the only difference that in the former they have reference to man's present life whereas in the latter they are

1. Ibid., pp. 199, 192-94.

3. I.D., III, 175-39.

6. Ūt. I, 541, 593-99.

2. A.D., pp. 231, 233, 233-39.

4. A.D., p. 28. 5. A.D., pp. 5-6

7. Ṣiṣṭa, p. (25) 80; cf. I.D., III, 188-



related more ~~and more~~ to the future life.<sup>1</sup> Then, al-Ghazālī's exposition of the vice of love of the world bears the influence of both the Sūfis and the philosophers.

Since the vice of love of the world is caused by ignorance of the true end of man and of God's purpose in creation, its remedy lies in this knowledge. Realization of the evils of this vice and of the deceptive nature of the world is also a part of the remedy, and these are discussed by al-Ghazālī in great detail.<sup>2</sup> Since of the many aspects of love of the world the greatest is love of wealth,<sup>3</sup> and since it causes many great evils,<sup>4</sup> al-Ghazālī deals with it first.

#### Love of wealth and miserliness

Love of wealth (ḥubb al-māl) is one of the greatest obstacles in the path to God,<sup>5</sup> and hence its removal from the soul through mortification is necessary for a novice while travelling on the path. Abandonment of superfluous wealth, however, is required of him before he embarks on his journey since such wealth stands between him and the truth. In the list of virtues and vices generosity, lack of covetousness and contentment are classified as virtues stemming from temperance, and greed, extravagance, neglect of the duties incurred by wealth, hatred for the poor and abasement to the rich are regarded as vices which are deviations of temperance to the extremes of excess and deficiency;<sup>6</sup> all these good and evil character-traits are related to love of wealth since they appear when it is banished from the soul or present in it. This is shown by al-Ghazālī in the introduction to his exposition of love of wealth. This vice, then, is not a new introduction here; it is already contained in the list of vices and virtues.

In accordance with his concepts of need and enjoyment al-Ghazālī explains the meaning of that wealth whose love is a root vice. He says that wealth has benefits as well as evils, and if it provides its possessor with the necessary minimum (or at least

1. Tadhīb, pp. 183-85, 180, 211, 213, 209, 217-18, 221.

2. I.D., III, 195-99, 175-89. 3. Ibid, n. 202. 4. Ibid, p. 200

5. E.S., pp. 532-33. 6. I.D., III, 47.

a moderate amount) of food, clothing and shelter, it is free from almost all harm and its love is not a vice. Rather this amount of wealth should be loved and sought by everyone since lack of this causes most people to be displeased with God and even sometimes to deny Him. This wealth is necessary to achieve that bodily health which is essential for knowledge and action, the two primary means of happiness.<sup>1</sup> For this reason the Prophet prayed to God to provide his family with sufficiency. Love of sufficient wealth is, in reality, the love not of wealth but of the good purposes for which it is needed.

It is the love of superfluous wealth which is a vice for most people.<sup>2</sup> This idea al-Ghazālī establishes by considering the benefit and evils of such wealth. Its benefit is both this-worldly and other-worldly. In the former case it may be a means of respect, independence from others, friendship and so forth. The other-worldly benefit is threefold: 1. use in religious acts such as pilgrimage and holy war; 2. use in others' good in four forms, namely, (a) charity (b) acts of humanity e.g. entertainment of guests, help, gifts, religious and customary duties etc. (c) preservation of self-respect and (d) payment of servants; 3. use in the common good e.g. in building bridges, mosques, hospitals and in establishing trusts for the poor. Al-Ghazālī shows that despite being for others' good these acts are ultimately for individual salvation. Because of these benefits God and His Apostle praised wealth and Al-Ghazālī regarded it as a means of happiness. The evil of superfluous wealth is also both this-worldly and other-worldly. The former is of three kinds: 1. enormous wealth facilitates the commission of vices and sins; 2. if it does not lead to these, it may cause the enjoyment of permissible pleasure which gradually extends to the doubtful and to acquiring and spending wealth in wrong ways; 3. even if all these evils are guarded against, the mind cannot be freed from

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1. Ibid, 246, 200, 203.

2. Ibid, p. 203.

occupation with the cares of wealth, in which case remembrance of God and reflection upon Him become impossible - an evil from which hardly anyone can be free. On account of these evils wealth is sometimes condemned by the Shari'a and is regarded by al-Ghazālī as that which removes the novice from the path.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of most people the evils of a superfluous wealth are much more in number than its benefits.<sup>2</sup> They should, therefore, eschew it as far as possible. The philosophers also urged the avoidance of the superfluous things of life, but they differ from al-Ghazālī in that they had in mind mundane evils while he is also concerned with other-worldly consequences. Al-Ghazālī harmonizes his concept of superfluous wealth with the Shari'a holding that there is no harm in possessing it if this involves no evil; but he observes that it is only a few people who can guard against its evil and so richness (ghinā) i.e. superfluous wealth is not bad for them.<sup>3</sup> Observation of the following five stipulations enables them to derive its benefits while avoiding its evils.<sup>4</sup> These are (1) to know the purpose of wealth, i.e. it is meant to meet man's basic needs; one who knows this loves only the necessary amount and gives away the excess, (2) to guard against acquiring wealth in ways unlawful, doubtful and contrary to humanity, (3) to preserve the necessary amount for oneself and the excess for the needy and to give this to them when they approach; (4) to be cautious in spending i.e. to be content with little in one's own case and moderate in spending money for others; and (5) to have the correct intention in acquisition, preservation and expenditure. People observing these five conditions are benefited by superfluous wealth; for them it is a gift (nīma) from God. They are the pious; the mystics, however, do not seek or preserve more than the necessary amount for they know that even after observing these stipulations enormous wealth will cause

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1. Ibid, p. 200, LV, 88 lines 4f.

2. I.D., III, 270. 3. Ibid, pp.270. 4. Ibid, pp.202,228, 205; K.S., p. 534.

them to loose the higher happiness. Therefore they are satisfied with sufficiency.

Satisfaction with sufficient wealth is the virtue of contentment (qanā'ah). Possessing more than this brings one out of the state of poverty.<sup>1</sup> This idea is confirmed in the Ḥimīyā.<sup>2</sup> It agrees with that of the philosophers for they define contentment in terms of moderation<sup>3</sup> which is identical with what al-Ghazālī means by sufficiency or need. Sometimes, however, he holds a very rigid view of contentment: it is satisfaction with the essentials of life i.e. with as little amount of <sup>inferior</sup> type of food, clothing and shelter as will provide a man for a day or a month at the most. A contented man does not seek more than this and if more comes to him without his seeking it he gives it away. Longing for more than the essentials negates contentment and defiles the soul by greed and covetousness.<sup>4</sup> These two definitions of contentment are in accordance with the two concepts of need and essentials already considered. Greed and covetousness form the extreme of excess of contentment; the extreme of deficiency is not mentioned because the less one possesses the greater is one's contentment<sup>5</sup> - a concept which is in harmony with the mystical virtues of poverty and asceticism. Avicenna, however, mentioned the extreme of deficiency which is negligence in acquiring necessities<sup>6</sup> for he does not agree with the ṣūfīs that the less one possesses wealth the better. Philosophers condemned greed on the ground that it causes grief and sorrow in this life,<sup>7</sup> but al-Ghazālī condemns it for its harm in this life as well as in the next. Its this-worldly evils are, shame, dishonour and acts contrary to humanity. Its other-worldly evil is its generating vices and sins e.g. hypocrisy, falsehood etc. which cause suffering in the hereafter.<sup>8</sup> After dealing with greed and contentment which appear when man lacks wealth, al-Ghazālī discusses miserliness and generosity which appear when he possesses it.<sup>9</sup>

1. Ibid, 210, 207.

2. I.I., p. 541

3. Iskawayh Tahdhīb, p. 20; Avicenna, Ihd, p. 145.

4. I.I., III, 205.

5. Al-Ghazālī extols al-ḥarāfī for his satisfaction with so little amount of food, clothing and dwelling that he was regarded as abnormal by his fellow villagers.

6. Ihd, p. 145. 7. Iskawayh, Tahdhīb, pp. 213, 221 where Socrates and al-Findī are quoted. 8. K.S., p. 540. 9. Ibid, p. 544



## Miserliness

Miserliness (bukhl) is one of the greater vices.<sup>1</sup> Al-Shazālī first examines the definitions of it and the related virtues given by others and finds them unacceptable. He then defines it in terms of the doctrine of the mean. In his view the just use of wealth is to spend it where it should be spent and to hold it where it should be held. Holding it where it should be spent is miserliness; spending it where it should be held is extravagance; between these two extremes is the mean (wasṭ) which is praiseworthy and is the virtue of generosity (sakhā', jūd).<sup>2</sup> The mean in spending is commendable because by observing it man frees his soul from its attachment to an aspect of the word, wealth - a freedom which is necessary for salvation.<sup>3</sup> In miserliness the soul is much more attached to wealth than in extravagance<sup>4</sup> and, <sup>hence it</sup> is discussed in detail. The situations where wealth should be spent or held are to be determined by the Shari'a and humanity (marūwwa) and custom (ʿāda). The Shari'a requires man gladly to pay the poor-rate, to maintain wife and children, etc. The requirements of humanity in respect of wealth differ according to the differences in men's conditions and the amount of wealth they possess. Freedom from humanity will only be achieved when both kinds of requirements are fulfilled. Neglect of the demands of the Shari'a, however, is the sign of the higher degree of miserliness. To preserve wealth for evil days after meeting both types of demands is miserliness for the most devout. In doing this when one's neighbour is needy there is taint of miserliness even for a common man. Then, generosity requires men to give away more than simply meeting the demands of the Shari'a and of humanity; its innumerable grades are in accordance with the innumerable differences in the amount of the extra wealth they spend.<sup>5</sup>

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1. A.D., p.124; K.S., p.551; I.D., III, p.227.

2. I.D., III, 225. 3. See Supra, pp. 98-99

4. Philosophers also regarded extravagance as a less serious vice; see Aristotle, Ethics, p.102; Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, p.24.

5. I.D., III, 225.



expenditure must be made gladly; if it is reluctant, it is only practice in generosity (tasakhkhāfī) and not generosity itself. To give way in order to receive thanks or praises or to escape from blame etc., or to obtain some service is not generosity for this is exchange, whereas in generosity there can be no exchange. This is conceivable only in the case of God. Man's giving away, however, will be generosity if it is for (a) a reward in the future life or (b) for acquiring the virtue of generosity and getting rid of miserliness. The view that in generosity giving away must be without expectation of any worldly thing in return is mystical in nature and is admittedly derived from al-Muhāsibī;<sup>1</sup> it is different to some extent from Aristotle's conception.<sup>2</sup> The highest grade of generosity in al-Ghazālī's view is preference (īthār) which is giving away wealth despite the givers need of it. In this view he is influenced by the Qur'ān where the Companions are praised for preference.<sup>3</sup> Since generosity is to give away the superfluous wealth it is inappropriate to the mystics who do not possess such wealth. What is appropriate to them is the virtue of preference.

The remedy for the vice of miserliness is knowledge and action. Knowledge concerns the cause of miserliness and its evils and the benefits of generosity. The former is love of wealth which itself has several causes. One is the natural inclination to satisfy desires which is facilitated by wealth. Acquisition of contentment and patience is the remedy for this. Another reason is the hope of living a long life. To remove it a man should often remember his coming death and his friends who have died leaving behind their wealth. The third cause is fear of poverty for one's children. This can be removed by a firm belief that since God created them He created their suc-

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1. Ibid., III, p. 26.

2. Ethics, p. 93.

3. I.D., III, 223.

tenance too, and by thinking that sometimes those who inherit no wealth become richer than those who inherit much. Lastly, some people love wealth for its own sake. The knowledge that the purpose of wealth is to meet the basic needs may motivate them to give away their superfluous wealth to the needy.<sup>1</sup> The evils of miserliness and the benefits of generosity are discussed by al-Ghazālī in detail.<sup>2</sup> Knowledge of these will only make man willing to shun miserliness, but to remove it from the soul he must spend wealth repeatedly. After doing this for sometime miserliness will vanish and generosity will be acquired. A subtle technique to form the habit of giving away is to start this for the sake of influence; before long it will be seen that miserliness is gone but love of influence has become dominant and this should now be removed. This technique should only be adopted when miserliness is stronger than love of influence.<sup>3</sup> After dealing with the vice of love of wealth al-Ghazālī discusses the vices of love of influence and hypocrisy because these are means of acquiring wealth. He treats them in the same 'book' for both have the same aim - the creation of status in the minds of others.

#### Love of Influence and Hypocrisy

Love of influence (ḥubb al-jāh) is a vice greater than love of wealth for it causes more evils.<sup>4</sup> Since this vice is not mainly philosophic in nature it is not mentioned in the list of virtues and vices. In the outline of the path to God abandonment of influential position is made a stipulation to be fulfilled before beginning the journey, and the removal of love of influence from the soul is regarded as a task to be accomplished on the way.<sup>5</sup> In al-Makkī's ethics forsaking of high status, influence, praise and domination is only regarded as the highest asceticism.<sup>6</sup> But al-Ghazālī calls love of them a vice and deals with it elaborately because he himself experienced its great

1. Ibid, 226-27.

2. Ibid, pp.227,210-22.

3. Ibid, p.227; K.S., pp. 553-55.

4. I.D., III, 244.

5. See supra pp. 135-23

6. Qūt, I, 541

evils, In his view, this vice has its basis in love of reputation (sīṭ) which is bad. Obscurity (khamūl) is good for the seekers after God. Spread of reputation for good qualities without making efforts for it, however, is not condemnable. Influence means the establishment of a person's place<sup>1</sup> (manzila) in others' minds so that they magnify him, gladly obey him and become so submissive that he can use them for all his purposes. Such an influential place is established in their minds as a result of their belief in his possessing a quality of perfection even though the belief is erroneous. The qualities of perfection are knowledge, pity, good character, handsome appearance, bodily strength or any other attribute usually regarded as perfection though not so in reality. These are the means by which man influences others. The results of such influence are praise, assistance in his works, preference, respectful salutations and so on.<sup>2</sup>

Influence and wealth are loved because they are means of the fulfilment of desires, but the latter is loved more since it is more advantageous to this end. There is, however, a deeper reason why men love wide spread influence and enormous wealth: love of them is natural (jibillī) in human being. Influence is power and domination over others, and power is one of the qualities of lordship (ṣifāt ar-rubūbiyya) and lordship is present in man's nature since his soul is related to the Lord. Although seeking influence is seeking power which is a divine attribute, it is bad and not perfection because these do not accompany man after death and because they lead him to many evils. To seek them, therefore, is foolishness.<sup>3</sup>

Some measure of influence, however, is necessary to life and love of this is not vice in al-Ghazālī's opinion. Man can easily repel enemies and oppressors if some people are obedient to him. He should also have some place in the minds of his servants, companions and friends whose help he needs in

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1. I.D., III, 238,240.      2. Ibid, p. 24.

3. Ibid, pp. 125-36, 238-39; K.S., pp. 563-64.

both secular and religious affairs. To seek this measure of influence is, in reality, to seek security in life and freedom from worldly entanglement which are necessary for the practice of morality. The necessary measure of influence therefore is a means to happiness provided it is not acquired by deception or by expressing devotional acts, i.e. by hypocrisy.<sup>1</sup> This influence is almost free from all evil.<sup>2</sup>

It is the superfluous influence which causes evils and its love, therefore, is a vice. Al-Ghazālī clearly explains this idea: if superfluous influence is achieved without any effort as in the case of the virtuous, there is no wrong in it.<sup>3</sup> Seeking this in the right way is not forbidden by the Shari'a for one's going out in beautiful dress and giving away for name and fame, etc., are not wrong acts.<sup>4</sup> But the seekers of influence are usually led to numerous vices, e.g. falsehood, deception, enmity and the like. They are bound to deal with others in such a way as will impress them; this is the seed of hypocrisy. Even if a lover of influence guards against these evils, he gets no time to prepare for the next life as he is always occupied with his influence upon others. In view of these manifold evils love of influence and love of honour are compared by the prophet to two wolves destroying a herd of cattle. But the man content with obscurity is free from all the harm caused by influence and is able to be wholly devoted to God.

The means of removing love of influence are knowledge and action. Knowledge concerns the real worth of influence and its evils in this life and the next. All these are explained in al-Ghazālī's two major works.<sup>5</sup> Action is to do those deeds which invite blame (malāma) by others or to retire to a place where he is unknown. The first is the especial feature of the malama-tiyya school of the sufis which emphasizes the committal<sup>action</sup> of vile acts in order to fall from the good opinion of others. Al-

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1. I.D., III, 246-47.

2. Ibid, pp.202,258-59.

3. Ibid, p. 240.

4. Ibid, pp.258-59.

5. Ibid, pp.248-49, 238-42; E.S., pp. 565-66, 560-61.



Ghazālī criticizes them and recommends only permissible deeds, e.g. to eat, in <sup>the</sup> others presence, <sup>of others</sup> too much with big mouthfuls, to keep water in a cup the colour of which resembles the colour of wine and so on.<sup>1</sup> Retirement to a city other than one's own is regarded by al-Ghazālī as very effective in getting rid of love of influence and he says this from his own experience. He mentions the disadvantages of retirement in one's own city.<sup>2</sup>

### Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy (riyā) is a great vice; it is greater than love of influence which, in turn, is greater than love of wealth.<sup>3</sup> In the list of vices, however, it was shown to stem from greed, a major vice which appears when the faculty of desire is excessive. Here al-Ghazālī explains it in its various aspects following a sūfī, al-Muḥāsibī.<sup>4</sup> He describes its nature by distinguishing it from love of influence: in hypocrisy an individual seeks to establish his place in others' minds by expressing his devotional acts ('ibādāt) but in love of influence he seeks it by means of his non-devotional acts. Hypocrisy is the desire to please men in order to gain something by means of an act of obedience to God (tā'ā).<sup>5</sup> Thus it consists of three elements, namely, that which is expressed, i.e. devotional act, that for which it is expressed and the desire for expressing an act and this is hypocrisy.<sup>6</sup> Devotion to God is usually expressed to others through one's bodily conditions, style of dress, speech, action and pious companions and visitors. The expression of piety by any of these means takes various forms which al-Ghazālī describes following al-Muḥāsibī very closely.<sup>7</sup> The basic motives of its expression is to create a place in others' minds and this motive is predominant in man because it gives the greatest pleasure since it appears to be a kind of power and perfection though not so in reality.<sup>8</sup>

1. I.D., III, 251,249; K.S., pp. 565-66, 560-61.

2. I.D., III, 251,249. 3. Ibid, p.257; cf. Ri'āya, p.89. In his exposition of hypocrisy in I.D., al-Ghazālī is very much influenced by al-Muḥāsibī who discussed in his Ri'āya, (pp.84-143) all the aspects of this vice under eighteen sections.

4. Ibid, pp.258,260; cf. Ibid, pp.90-91.

5. Ibid, p.257; cf. Ibid, p.89. 6. Ibid, pp.258,260; cf. Ibid, pp.90-92.

7. Ibid, pp.257-58; cf. Ibid, pp.100-106. 8. Ibid, p.238; cf. Ibid.



The reason why hypocrisy is so grave a vice is to be found in the seriousness of its consequences; if it is the only motive of a devotional act, it renders it not only void but also sinful. The act is void because the intention to serve God is absent in it. It is sinful for two reasons, one is related to man and the other to God. The first is that a hypocrite deceives others by his act of devotion since he gives them the false impression of being a religious person, and deception is sin in any matter, religious or secular. The second is that intending to please men by means of service to God is jesting with Him, for it amounts to regarding them abler than Him in bestowing favour and better than Him in being objects of worship; elevating men over God in this way is the greatest jest with Him. The Prophet called hypocrisy the lesser polytheism (ash-shirk al-asghar) and al-Ghazālī gives the reason for his saying so and concludes that a hypocrite, as authoritative and analogical proofs show, is undoubtedly in the wrath of God. If both hypocrisy and serving God are the motives of a devotional act it is a partnership (shirk) which negates sincerity and no reward will be given for this act.<sup>1</sup>

Hypocrisy is of many forms, some of which are more harmful than others. al-Ghazālī explains this with reference to its three constituent elements. In relation to the first element, the desire itself, he says that if it is purely hypocrisy it is the worst form of this vice. If the desire for hypocrisy is mingled with the desire for reward from God and the latter is so weak that it alone cannot bring about the act whereas the former can, this is very near to the first form. If both desires are of equal strength, the act is neither useful nor harmful. If the desire for hypocrisy strengthens the desire for reward but is so weak that it alone cannot lead to the acts whereas the other can, the act will cause both punishment and reward in proportion to the strength of the respective desires.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid, p.259-60; cf. Ibid, pp.91-2.

2. Ibid, III, 260; cf. Ibid, pp.128-29.

In relation to the second element, i.e. that in which hypocrisy is shown, there are three grades of this vice. The first, hypocrisy in faith (īmān), is the worst. It is to confess the oneness of God verbally but to deny it mentally. Mental denial of Paradise, Hell, the future life and the need of the Sharīʿa is included in this grade. The second is hypocrisy in the basic devotional acts, e.g. ritual prayer, fasting etc. despite faith in God. This is also serious but less than the first grade. The third is hypocrisy in the supererogatory acts i.e. to perform them when one is among others but to neglect them when alone. This is also very harmful but less than the second grade. Hypocrisy in the parts of an act is also of three grades. One is hypocrisy in those parts without which an act is invalid; this is below the grade just mentioned. Below this is hypocrisy in those parts which are needed for its complement but in whose neglect there is no harm, e.g. lengthening of prostration when one is among others and shortening it when alone. The lowest is hypocrisy in religious matters outside the supererogatory acts, e.g. being in the first row of a congregation at prayer.<sup>1</sup>

In relation to the third element, i.e. the motive of hypocrisy, there are three grades of this vice. The worst is when the motive is to have an opportunity of committing sin. Next to this is expressing piety in order to refute a charge of crime. The second grade is to show piety to gain any permissible thing such as wealth. This is forbidden because in it a worldly object is sought by an act directed towards God, but it is below the first grade since the thing sought is permissible. The third is to express an act of devotion not for gaining anything but in order that one may not be regarded imperfect. These are the grades of hypocrisy all of which are harmful.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid, p.261; cf. Ibid, pp. 123-26.

2. Ibid, p. 262; cf. Ibid, pp. 126-28.

Some forms of hypocrisy are open and others are hidden. Open hypocrisy is what leads man to action although the desire for reward from God is mingled with it. Slightly less open hypocrisy is that which, though it alone cannot lead to action, makes easier that which is intended for reward, e.g. a man regularly performs the night prayer with all sincerity but feels it burdensome; when any guest is present he feels it easy. More hidden than this is the hypocrisy which has no influence upon action even by way of making it easy. Yet it is present in the mind and its sign is gladness when some one becomes aware of the act; this joy originates from a hypocrisy hidden in the mind as fire is hidden in stone. More hidden is the hypocrisy for which a man neither likes to express his action nor is he glad when it is somehow expressed against his will; but he expects respect from others; he is displeased if they do not respect him and this proves that unconsciously he wants respect for the act which he had kept completely hidden. Since for him performance of an act is not like its non-performance in relation to others, he is not content with God's awareness of the act and is not free from a hidden hypocrisy which is more hidden than the creeping of an ant on a black stone in a dark night. Freedom from it is only possible for the most virtuous. Thus there are many forms of hidden hypocrisy; the proof of its presence in the mind is the feeling of difference between men's awareness of an act and that of animals.<sup>1</sup> However, every form of hypocrisy cannot corrupt the act. The problem of corruption is discussed by al-Ghazālī in detail.<sup>2</sup>

To get rid of the vice of hypocrisy strong mortification is needed for everyone. In one way this vice can be removed from the soul and in another man can rebel the passing thoughts which come to mind when he is engaged in a devotional act. The former consists of knowledge and action. Knowledge concerns the causes of hypocrisy and their removal by realizing the harm it does in the hereafter and in this life. The basic cause is love of influence which is analyseable into three elements, namely, love of

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1. Ibid, p. 264; cf. Ibid, p. 133.

2. Ibid, pp. 265-68.

praise, fear of blame and greed for wealth. Muḥāsibī also regarded these as provoking hypocrisy. Both agree that these will be removed when one knows the evils resulting from hypocrisy which are anxiety to please men, corruption of the soul, disgrace on the Day of Resurrection and finally suffering in Hell. Action is to hide devotional acts from others by performing them inside the house with the door closed. After practising it for sometime, desire for it will not arise in the mind and contentment with God's being aware of it will be produced. Privacy is the most effective means of getting rid of hypocrisy.<sup>1</sup> The passing thoughts of hypocrisy (khatarāt ar-rivā') produced in the mind of a person engaged in a devotional act are three in number. The first is his thought that perhaps someone is aware of his act. This is followed by the arousal of a desire (raghba) for praise from him, i.e. the desire for hypocrisy. His mind then accepts this desire which now becomes strong. To repel the first thought he should realize that it is all the same whether or not someone is aware of his act and that it is enough when God knows it. The second, the desire, can be repelled by recollecting what he has already learnt regarding the harm of hypocrisy. As a result of this recollection dislike for hypocrisy will be aroused in the mind and if this dislike is strong enough it will repel the desire and consequently the third thought will not be produced. Knowledge thus is the basic element here for this is what creates the dislike for hypocrisy.<sup>2</sup>

#### Pride and Conceit.

Pride (kibr) and conceit (ʿulb) are the greatest of all the vices.<sup>3</sup> In the list of virtues and vices al-Ghazālī only mentioned them as vices which appear when the faculty of anger deviated from its mean state to the extreme of excess, but now he is dealing with them in all their aspects. In regard to the nature of pride, he says that it requires two elements other than itself, one is a person towards whom it is directed and the other a quality of perfection in which it is taken. Pride is

1. Ibid., 268-69; K.S., p.586 2. I.D., III, 270; cf. Ibid., pp.107-09.

3. Ibid., p.149. Al-Muḥāsibī in his Hiya, p.232, regarded pride as a great vice and not the greatest vice. His exposition of this vice and of conceit in this work (pp.207-70) is similar to that of al-



man's joy and steadfast belief that he is greater than another in some perfection and includes his contempt for him. If a man supposes himself great and another greater or equal this is not pride, nor is it pride when he supposes another contemptible and himself as more or equally contemptible. Pride comes to mind when a man believes that he has worth, that another man also has worth and that his worth is greater than that of another: these three beliefs inflate him so that there is produced in his mind a stirring joy, a trust in what he believes and a sense of his own greatness and contempt for the other. This sense, this joy and this trust is the trait of pride. Thus pride is a state of the soul generated from three beliefs. This state is also called self-esteem ('izza) and also sense of greatness (takabbur).<sup>1</sup> From this inward state proceeds boastful action (tatakkabbur). Al-Ghazālī mentions its many forms of which haughtiness in walking and in dress are regarded as very wrong.<sup>2</sup>

On the basis of that against which pride is taken it has three forms, namely, pride against God, pride against the prophets and pride against other people. The first is the worst, the second borders on the first and the third i.e. one's adjudging oneself great and another contemptible is of the lowest grade of pride but has grave evil consequences.<sup>3</sup> This pride may be in religious qualities i.e. knowledge and action or in secular affairs such as noble birth, physical beauty or strength, wealth and followers, friends, relatives, assistants, etc. These are the usual means of pride. Display of pride in each of these takes many forms.<sup>4</sup> To support this view that pride is the worst of all the vices al-Ghazālī quotes a tradition to the effect that the man in whose mind is the weight of a grain of mustard seed of pride will not enter Paradise. He gives the reason for this:<sup>5</sup>

~~See 2. previous page~~ — Ghazālī in his I.D.; only the conception of the mean in the virtue of humility seems to have been derived from al-Fārābī's Fuṣūl, p.113.

1. I.D., III, 296-97; cf. Ri'āya, pp.233, 239; Aristotle, ethics, pp. 103-104 where he says that gentleman must be a great shrewd man and gives his traits.
2. Ibid, pp.276-78, 304, 305-06; cf. Ibid, p.235
3. Ibid, p.293; cf. Ibid, pp.235-38.
4. Ibid, pp.300-04.
5. Ibid, pp.297, 299; I.D., pp.149-50; cf. Ri'āya, pp.247, 232-33, 233, 239.



in the Arbaʿīn he mentions three types of abominations caused by pride. In the Ihyāʾ<sup>2</sup> he explains by means of his theory of the interconnection of vices that a proud man necessarily commits every vice and is deprived of every virtue. Such a one cannot enter Paradise. Besides, pride belongs by right only to God for He is the all-powerful and the master of all, and so man's pride amounts to disputing His sole rights. Pride also prevents its possessor from accepting the truth from others although he knows it as such; it sometimes leads to pride in God.

To get rid of pride is an 'individual obligation' since it is present in everyone. By one method it can be removed from the soul and by another only its expression can be prevented. One element in the first method is knowledge which concerns man's knowledge of himself and his Lord. When he knows himself he realises his small worth and the irrelevance of pride to him. When he knows his Lord he knows His might and majesty and realises that pride befits Him alone. Knowledge of these as the cure of pride was also emphasized by al-Ruhānibī.<sup>1</sup> Al-Ghazālī adds to it another element, i.e. action which is to persevere in those deeds that are the opposite to those resulting from pride. Thus to remove pride against God prayer should be performed. To banish pride against people it is necessary habitually to perform humble acts the nature of which al-Ghazālī shows by describing conduct of the Prophet and the virtuous.<sup>2</sup> The second method of banishing pride also consists of knowledge and action but these concern the means of pride already mentioned. Al-Ghazālī insists that remedy by knowledge alone is incomplete; perseverance in those acts which are the opposite to pride is very necessary.<sup>3</sup>

Freedom from pride does not require man to be base since baseness (khasāʾa) is also a vice. While pride is a deviation from the virtue of courage to recklessness, baseness is a deviation from it to cowardice; the mean (waṭṭ) between the two should be

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1. Ibid, pp.303-09; cf. Ibid, pp.243-58.

2. Ibid, pp. 311, 305-08.

3. Ibid, p. 316.

acquired for this is the virtue of humility (tawādu') "the fountain-head of all character-traits of the pious". In the list of virtues it was omitted; soberness (wasār) was mentioned there as, it seems, the mean between pride and baseness; in the list of the marks of good character soberness was included (because it was extolled in a tradition). Therefore soberness and humility seem to be identical in al-Ghazālī. This also seems to be the case with the Muslim philosophers for al-Fārābī and Avicenna mentioned humility and not soberness and Miskawayh spoke of soberness and not of humility (although by soberness he meant something different from al-Ghazālī). Whereas al-Fārābī and Avicenna only briefly mentioned humility, al-Ghazālī discusses it in detail. He says that humility as the mean between pride and baseness<sup>13</sup> achieved if everything is put in the place it deserves. Thus a man's sitting in front of those who are equal to him is pride, whereas to sit behind them is humility. A scholar would be base should he, on a shoe-maker's entering his room, give him his own chair, and, on his leaving, accompany him to the door to see him off. But he is humble should he do these for those who are equal or near to him. His humility towards the shoe-maker lies in speaking to him cheerfully, interrogating him mildly, accepting his invitation, trying to meet his need and not considering him contemptible and himself great. In matters of dress humility is the mean between the kind which makes a man famous for his poor quality clothing and the kind which makes him famous for his excellent dress. None should dishonour himself. Failure to preserve his own worth, flattery, etc. are the signs of deviation from the mean to baseness; this is, however, less serious a vice than the vice of deviation to pride. The method of acquiring the mean is by man's knowledge of himself and his lord and being humble towards those who are inferior to him so that humility in its proper place will be easy.

The definition of humility by al-Ghazālī as the mean between pride and baseness has its main source in al-Fārābī who

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defined it in the same way;<sup>1</sup> Avicenna regarded it as a subdivision of wisdom which restrains the soul from pride.<sup>2</sup> But the great emphasis which al-Ghazālī and also al-Muḥṣibī lay upon the humility as a virtue is because of its being emphasized in the Qur'ān and Tradition; Muslim philosophers consider it as a virtue owing to the influence of both Islam and the Hellenistic thought particularly Stoicism.<sup>3</sup> Like al-Muḥṣibī,<sup>4</sup> he explains how it is possible for a learned man or a pious person to be humble towards an infidel, an ignorant, a wicked man and the like and not to judge himself greater than them, despite knowing the excellence of knowledge and piety. The gist of his ideas is contained in the following passage:

"Then man's duty is not to take pride against anyone. Rather if he looks at an ignorant person he will say, 'this <sup>man</sup> is more <sup>to be</sup> excused than I'. If he looks at a learned man, he will say, 'this man learned what I did not learn; so how can I be like him?' If he looks at an old man who is older than him in age he will say, 'this man obeyed God before me; so how can I be like him?' If he looks at a heretic or an infidel, he will say, 'how can I know that his end (khayr) will not be made with Islam and my end will be that in which he now is; so being considerate of the end he is able to banish pride from his soul'.<sup>5</sup>

### Conceit

Al-Ghazālī describes the nature of conceit (ʿujb) by pointing out its difference from and agreement with pride. In his opinion it differs from pride in that while pride requires for its existence in a man's mind another person against whom it is taken, conceit does not need any such man, so that if only one individual were created in the world conceit and not pride could have existed in him.<sup>6</sup> It agrees with pride in that there must be a real or supposed perfection concerning which a person is conceited. His realization of possessing this perfection creates in his mind one of three states; fear of its disappearance or corruption by the will of God who bestows it; no fear of these but gladness in it

1. Arṣūl, n. 113. 2. ʿAhd, n. 144; Ashlāq, p. 153.

3. Fehme Jadaane, L'Influence de stoïcisme sur la pensée musulmane, Beirut, 1968, n. 119-234. 4. ʿAḥṣā, n. 263, 264-65, 268, 9.

5. I.D., III, 314; cf. Ibid. 6. Ibid., p. 276.

since it is given by God's grace; no fear but rejoicing in it thinking it as achieved through his own effort and not as given by God; only this last state is conceit. Thus conceit is to consider an attribute of perfection as great and to trust in its continuity with forgetfulness of relating it to its real giver; it is not, as pride is, related to other people. This difference between pride and conceit was also made by al-Muhāsibī,<sup>1</sup>

The consideration as great of a gift given to another and its recalling (dhān) is also included in conceit. Expectation of service, thanks, and the like for the gift is called presumption (idlāl). Thus this vice is an addition to conceit; every case of it is a case of conceit but not vice versa for in conceit a gift is considered great without the expectation of any recompense for it, but in presumption recompense is also desired. Presumption in devotional acts consists in a man's belief that by means of these he has acquired status with God and deserves special consideration from him in this life; he feels that undesirable events are less likely to happen to him than to a sinner; he expects God to accept his prayer more readily than a sinner's so that he is surprised only when his own prayer is refused, as if, by his acts he has done a favour to God whose recompense is required (wājib). This meaning of presumption is identical with that of al-Muhāsibī.<sup>2</sup> Both agree that conceit in addition to causing all the evils of pride is an obstacle to knowledge and action, the two primary means to happiness, because it makes them appear sufficient to their possessor so that he neglects efforts to increase them.<sup>3</sup>

Conceit is due to ignorance of the true nature of the qualities of perfection concerning which one is conceited. Its remedy therefore, lies in the true knowledge of them. Because conceit in good deeds is more usual than that in other qualities of perfection such as beauty, noble birth, etc., for the former are thought

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1. al-Muhāsibī, pp. 232, 247.      2. Ibid, pp. 213-14

3. I.D., III, 319; cf. Ibid, pp. 207-08

to be done through one's own effort, al-Ghazālī deals with the nature of good deeds in detail. The gist of his discussion is that in reality they are given by God's grace without man's prior desert (istiḥcāq) or right (ḥaqq) to them. Reflection on this makes a man realize the folly of being conceited and ingrateful to God. The idea that every good is God's gift he explains by means of the doctrine of acquisition (kasb). This idea was also emphasised by al-Muḥāsibī who, however, did not attach it to this doctrine.<sup>1</sup> Besides removing conceit by knowing the nature of perfection and gift, one can also get rid of it by removing its means. The means are eight of which seven are the same as the means of pride and the eighth is wrong opinion which appears excellent to its possessor owing to his ignorance. Al-Ghazālī explains how each means should be remedied and his explanation is similar to that of al-Muḥāsibī.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid, pp.320-22; cf. Ibid, pp.216-20.

2. Ibid, pp.322-28; cf. Ibid, pp.220-32.



## CHAPTER V

### MYSTICAL VIRTUES

#### Nature of Mystical Virtues

From the previous chapter one may perhaps clearly know what are the evil qualities of the soul according to al-Ghazālī, what harm they cause their possessor and how they can be removed. When they have been banished through mortification and self-discipline, the soul becomes clean and purified and, therefore, fit to find a place in the nearer presence of God, for it is only such a soul that will be entitled to a place there, as He said in the Qur'ān, "...except he who comes to God with a soul free".<sup>1</sup> Because, as a result of the purification of the inward self (tahārat al-bātin) through a long process of pain and struggle, the inner faculties have come back to their proper states and the defilements of vice which, as it were accumulated on the face of the soul are removed, it is now in a position to acquire such praiseworthy qualities as will not only save it from damnation but enable it to attain nearness to God; it, in short, is prepared for a new life. With the removal of the evil qualities that constituted obstacles on the path to God, the novice can now easily travel the path; he will be travelling it step by step until he reaches the end when he will be called a ḡufī.

The virtuous qualities which the seeker after God will now be trying to acquire are stated in the Ihyā' as repentance, patience, gratitude, hope, fear, poverty and asceticism, unity and trust, love, yearning, intimacy, satisfaction, intention, sincerity, truthfulness, vigilance, self-examination and meditation. Poverty is not an independent mystical quality; it is described as an

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1. J.Q., p.12.

introduction to asceticism. Divine unity, too, is not a mystical virtue; it is regarded as the basis of trust.<sup>1</sup> Because these two are not independent mystical qualities, they are not mentioned in the Arbaʿīn. All these virtues are also dealt with in the Kīmīyāʾ, although their order in this work is different from that in the Ihyāʾ; true, however, in the former work intimacy is not discussed under a separate heading, but along with yearning. In the Arbaʿīn, an abridgement of the Ihyāʾ, only the most important of these virtues have been dealt with; these are repentance, fear, asceticism, patience, gratitude, sincerity, truthfulness, trust, love and satisfaction. In the ethical systems of some of the philosophers these virtues are completely absent, while in those of others only a few of them are present without being emphasized and developed in the manner they deserve. In the Qurʾān and the Tradition, on the contrary, all of them are to be found with a brief explanation of their meaning. It is the sūfīs who laid so much emphasis upon them, developed their meaning to a great extent, considered the various aspects of them and arranged them in a hierarchical order; they stressed the fact that these virtues in their perfect form are only attainable by the mystics. For these reasons they may be called mystical virtues or, more properly, mystical qualities.

Acquisition of these mystical qualities after the accomplishment of the task of purification is identified by al-Ghazālī with the prosperity of the inward self (ʿamrān al-bāṭin),<sup>2</sup> and also with the enlightenment of the soul (tanwīr al-qalb).<sup>3</sup> In their perfect form they are appropriate to the highest category i.e. the mystics; in their imperfect form they are attainable by the ~~few i.e. the~~ pious, and in their basic form they are present in every believer;<sup>4</sup>

1. See, infra, pp. 227-28

2. I.D., IV, 213.

3. I.D., IV, 29.

4. I.D., IV, 334-35, 284.

this gradation is to be found in the discussion of most of these virtues. Without acquiring them completely no one can attain nearness to God and become entitled to the highest happiness. In all the ethical works of al-Ghazālī dealing with them they are spoken of as leading to salvation (munjiyāt) and also as the qualities of salvation (sifāt munjiyāt); the term salvation is not here used in its strict sense; it is used in its broad sense which is synonymous with happiness including its highest form. Many of them are also called the 'stations' of those who traverse the way to God (maqāmāt as-sālikīn), also the stations of religion (maqāmāt ad-dīn) and stages of religion (manāzil ad-dīn): the term religion used in this context is defined as "the relation of (devotional) practices (mu'āmalā) between a man and his Lord".<sup>1</sup> It is plain, therefore, that the mystical qualities mentioned above are to be acquired for the special purpose of attaining proximity to God. The acquisition of the four basic virtues with the sub-divisions described in a previous chapter was only urged for the general purpose of achieving a good character. The mystical virtues are also called praiseworthy character-traits (akhlāq mahmūda) as are the basic virtues, although the term fadīla (virtue) is more often used for them following the philosophers. So the terms 'quality of salvation', 'station' and 'stage' identify a mystical virtue as the word 'virtue' (fadīla) identifies a basic virtue; the term 'praiseworthy character trait' is common to all the virtues.

Although all the mystical qualities mentioned above are to be acquired by a disciple seeking nearness to God, they are not of the same grade and importance. They have been divided by al-Ghazālī into (a) those which are means, and (b) those which are ends. The

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1. I.D., IV, 365.

latter, if acquired in this life, will remain in the soul eternally after death; spiritual training aims at creating them in the soul in this life. They are gratitude, unity and trust, love, yearning, intimacy and satisfaction. All other mystical virtues are those regarded as means; they are not intended to be in the soul after death; they are only to help man acquire the virtues regarded as ends. Because they are means they should, in al-Ghazālī's view, be stated first. This division of the mystical virtues is clearly made in a passage of the Kīmīyā'<sup>1</sup> and the order of the virtues in this work is based upon this division, for the means-group is dealt with first, leaving the latter part of the work for the ends-group; gratitude, an end-virtue, is discussed with a means-virtue<sup>e</sup>, patience, for an especial reason to be mentioned later. The order of the virtues in the Arba'in too is similar to that in the Kīmīyā' and this suggests that in this book also al-Ghazālī has in mind the idea of the above-mentioned division. In the Ihyā', however, this division is absent; instead, there is here a suggestion for another classification: six virtues namely, intention, sincerity, truthfulness, vigilance, self-examination and meditation are treated last i.e. after love, without mentioning the reason for this; these are not called 'stations'. This suggests that these six are regarded as a group needed to support and help the other virtues which form another group. If this was really his view in this work, this must have been rejected in favour of that in the Kīmīyā'. He was constantly cultivating<sup>ng</sup> these virtues himself and the more he cultivated them the clearer became his knowledge of their role and significance in the beautification of the inward self; at the stage of writing the Kīmīyā' he understood repentance

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1. See infra, p. 184

etc. as means and gratitude, trust etc. as ends and expressed this in the following passage of this work:

"Know that what we have called the qualities of salvation are of two divisions. One comprises those which come first in the path of religion and whose being in the soul is not the aim, e.g. repentance, patience, asceticism, self-examination and poverty; all these are means to what lies after these. The other kind consists of the qualities which are the aim and the end; they are sought for their existence in the soul and not for serving as means to something else, e.g. love, yearning, satisfaction, unity and trust; and gratitude is among them; every quality that is an end will remain (in the soul) in the next life. <sup>1</sup> So it (gratitude) needs to be stated at the end of the work."

Besides classifying the mystical virtues as means and ends, al-Ghazālī presents them in the form of a hierarchy, a gradually ascending order. Like other *sūfīs*, he puts repentance at the bottom of it <sup>2</sup> and, like al-Makki, <sup>3</sup> love at the top. Love is regarded as the highest 'station' of the path and several qualities such as yearning, intimacy and satisfaction are said to be its by-products. <sup>4</sup> All the means-virtues and the ends-virtues that are below love are thought to be those which prepare the novice for it. Although all the means-virtues are means to all the ends-virtues, one of the former is shown to be especially related to one of the latter. The mutual link between two means-virtues is also shown in many cases. An important point about the ascending order is that when the novice after acquiring a virtue passes to another, his concern with it is not finished; rather he will be cultivating it throughout his whole life; what is finished is only his mortification and self-discipline. <sup>5</sup> The sign of the complete acquisition of a mystical virtue is the same as that of a basic virtue i.e. to feel pleasure and ease in

1. *K.S.*, p. 675.

2. *I.D.*, IV, 2.

3. *Qūt*, I, 364.

4. *I.D.*, IV, 290, 285, 289.

5. *I.D.*, IV, 60; *K.S.*, p. 669.



exercising it.<sup>1</sup>

Each station of the path is regarded by al-Ghazālī as consisting of three elements, namely, knowledge (ʿilm), disposition (ḥāl) and action (ʿamal).<sup>3</sup> The first produces the second and the second the third - when knowledge is present, disposition is necessarily produced in the soul provided there is no obstacle to it; when disposition is created, certain relevant actions cannot but proceed from it. This is the order (tartīb) of the three elements and this is how they involve each other (talāzum). This tripartite nature of a mystical virtue which, like a basic virtue, is identified with a character-trait is not inconsistent with the definition already given of a character-trait as a disposition of the soul only and not as a faculty or knowledge or action because in the mystical virtue too it is the disposition what is precisely called virtue, while knowledge is regarded as its basis (asl, bināʾ) or cause (sabab) and action as its result (thamara). That mystical virtue precisely refers to the disposition is clearly expressed by al-Ghazālī in many places.<sup>4</sup> Knowledge and action are here added to the disposition in order to give a complete view - so complete that one finds in it both the cause and the effect of a virtue. The idea that a mystical virtue is made up of three elements is entirely al-Ghazālī's own; his sūfī predecessors' definitions of it sometimes included only one element and at times two and hence he rejects them all as incomplete but not as incorrect.<sup>5</sup> His conception of a mystical virtue may be made clearer by explaining its three elements one by one.

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1. I.D., IV, 60; K.S., p. 669.      2. I.D., IV, 59; K.S., p. 674.

3. I.D., IV, 71, 211, 4, 55, et passim; K.S., pp. 676.

4. I.D., IV, 35, 72, 187, 211, 223, 251, 312, et passim.

5. I.D., IV, 223.

The knowledge which forms the basis of a virtue is particularly concerned with the benefit of that virtue in the hereafter and with the evil of its opposite. In addition, this knowledge concerns sometimes such general matters of the next world as may be related to that virtue only indirectly. ~~To be capable of producing the disposition which is precisely the virtue only indirectly.~~ To be capable of producing the disposition which is precisely the virtue it is not enough for the knowledge to be entirely certain (yaqīn); what is necessary is that the absolutely certain knowledge has got mastery over the soul and become so deepseated in it that it is inseparable from it. This is made clear by using words like istawlat al-ma'rifa, i'tiqād qāṭi', tasdiq yaqīn, tasdiq bi'l qalb, īmān jāzim and so on.<sup>1</sup> Such firm conviction is what Socrates meant by knowledge in his famous maxim, 'virtue is knowledge'. His influence upon al-Ghazālī does not extend beyond this, for the latter, unlike the former, maintains that even when firm conviction is present, disposition may not be aroused because of some obstacle ('ā'iq) which is in most cases the dominance of passions.

Hāl (disposition) produced by knowledge is that to which all the terms used for mystical virtue refer precisely. It denotes a quality of the soul that is fixed (thabatāt) and established (aqāmāt). Thus as an element of a mystical virtue, hāl means the same thing as is meant by the term hay'a rāsikha in the definition of a character-trait (khuluq) which was identified with a basic virtue. That hāl used in this context means a fixed quality is evident from the fact that 'station' (maqām)

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1. I.D., IV, 3, 340, 321, 222, 250, 211.

is defined as a fixed and established quality of the soul<sup>1</sup> and in some cases 'station' is identified with hāl.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, many of the mystical qualities are, as already mentioned, precisely referred to the element of hāl; they are also called praiseworthy character-traits and a character-trait has already been defined as an established quality of the soul; the conclusion, therefore, is that hāl is an established quality. There is, however, another meaning of hāl in al-Ghazālī and this meaning it bears when it is used in the context of 'station'. In his view, a quality of the soul is a 'station' when it is fixed and established but when it is accidental (ʿarīd) and transitory it is hāl (state). This meaning is reiterated in the Imlā,<sup>3</sup> written in the defence of the Ihyā. In the latter work, this meaning is explained with the help of the phenomenon of yellowness. Dividing yellowness into that which is fixed e.g. yellowness of gold, that which removes quickly like the yellowness of one's face created by fear and that which lies between the two e.g. the yellowness of a sick man, al-Ghazālī says that "a quality of the soul is divisible into these kinds so that what is not fixed is named hāl for it soon changes (yahūlu) and this is true in every quality of the soul".<sup>4</sup> The difference between 'state' and 'station', then, is one of degree and not of kind. State is not said to be something that descends to the soul as a gift from God; it is only said to be a quality that is accidental and transitory. Clearly, then, al-Ghazālī's definition of 'station' accords with those of other sūfīs but his

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1. I.D., IV, 123, 225. 2. I.D., IV, 35, 312, 211, 223, 251, et passim.

3. P. 16.

4. I.D., IV, 123, 215.

conception of hāl is not the same as theirs.<sup>1</sup>

Action proceeding from the disposition is of two kinds, namely, that of the bodily members and that of the soul. In the case of a few virtues what generates from the soul is also described as qualities.<sup>2</sup> The important point is that if a mystical quality of a disposition is produced in the soul, it must give rise to action, and this action will, again, leave its influence upon the soul as a result of which the quality will be strengthened; all actions are for the soul's benefit.<sup>3</sup> This idea is based on al-Ghazālī's theory of circular relationship between the soul and the body. The nature of action is determined by the nature of the disposition. The principle of opposite action is applied to the element of action in the case of some mystical virtues.<sup>4</sup>

With this brief discussion about the aim of the mystical virtues, their classification, and hierarchical order and their elements or parts, it may be proper to pass on to discuss all the mystical virtues one by one. Since a virtue is completed by three elements, it will be sufficient if the attempt is confined to dealing with those materials that are directly related to them. All the proofs given from revelation and from the sayings of mystics and godly men will be omitted for the sake of brevity. The means-virtues will be dealt with first, for this is logical and this is what al-Ghazālī himself did.

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1. For their views see Hujwiri, Kashf, pp. 180-81; Qushayrī, Risāla, I, p. 193; Sarraj, Lumaʿ, pp. 65-66; Gardet, "Hāl", ET, II, 83; Arberry, Sufism, p. 75-

2. I.D., IV, 290.      3. K.S., p. 746; I.D., IV, 314, 328.

4. I.D., IV, 326, 346, 357, 9, 32.

## The Mystical Virtues Regarded as Means

### Repentance

Repentance (tawba) is the first 'station' of the path leading to God; it is the first of the mystical virtues regarded as means. Why it is necessary at all, why it is required of everyone in every condition and why it should be acquired first by the novice are questions briefly discussed by al-Ghazālī.<sup>1</sup> In his view, repentance as a mystical virtue is much more than what it is ordinarily understood to be. For the common man, repentance is from the sins committed by the body. For the novice, it is, in addition, from the roots (usūl) of these sins in the soul i.e. from the destructive qualities of envy, pride, hypocrisy and so on; at a higher level of moral progress, it is also from diabolic suggestions (wasāwis), inner utterance of the soul (ḥadīth an-nafs) and a sense of guilt that occasionally comes to the mind; at the highest level, i.e. the level of the most devout, it is from the mind's occasional heedlessness in remembering God; forgetting Him, although for a moment, is regarded by them as an imperfection and so repentance from it, too, is required of them; they must turn away from everything other than what leads them to proximity to God.<sup>2</sup>

As a mystical virtue repentance, according to al-Ghazālī, consists of three elements, namely, knowledge, disposition and action. By knowledge is here meant man's awareness of the great harm of sin, its causing a veil between him and all that he loves. When he knows this with certainty, pain for his

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1. I.D., IV, 8-9, 11-12; K.S., p. 647.

2. I.D., IV, 10-11; K.S., p. 650; cf. Arberry, Sufism, p. 75.



being veiled from his beloved owing to his committing sin is roused in his soul; this state of experiencing pain is known as contrition (nadam). When contrition predominates in the mind, there hastens to it resolution (ʿazm) for action related to the past, present and future. Action at present is abandoning sin; action in the future is continuing the abandonment of it until death; and action relating to the past is atoning for the sins committed. Thus knowledge causes contrition which, in turn, causes resolve to act. This is the order of these elements, and repentance refers to the sum total of them all in this order. The element of contrition is, of course, the essence of repentance, and this is the reason why it alone is sometimes referred to as the virtue of repentance.<sup>1</sup>

Since repentance is only made perfect by completing its three constituent parts, al-Ghazālī states in detail the stipulations of their completeness. The element of knowledge, he says, is completed by the knowledge of four things. The first is that 'misery' has its causes, one of which is sin; when a sin is committed, the evil effect of it is produced on the soul; its purity is thus lost and, consequently, it becomes unworthy of finding a place in the presence of God; this is how sin causes a veil between man and God, and knowledge of this is needed for repentance. The second is that the prophets had the greatest knowledge of the science of soul's diseases and that they were most truthful in interpreting it. The third thing to know is their sayings and also the Qurānic verses containing God's rebuke of the sinners. The fourth thing to be aware of

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1. I.D., IV, 3-4, 31, 34; K.S., p. 649.

is the amount of the harm caused by each particular sin and the way of atoning for it.<sup>1</sup>

The element of disposition i.e. the contrition produced by the knowledge of these things is the essence of repentance. The sign of the completeness of contrition is its rising to such an extent that it creates remorse, sorrow, pouring of tears and anxiety for a long time; when it is complete the soul becomes pure; the sweetness of sin is changed into bitterness, inclination to it into aversion, and liking for it into hatred; bitterness is felt for all sins because all are similar in respect of creating a veil between man and God.<sup>2</sup>

The element of resolve to act aroused by contrition has its relation to the past, the present and future. Resolve related to the present can only be complete when all sins have been abandoned and all the obligatory devotional acts are being properly performed. Resolve linked with the future i.e. the determination not to sin for ever should, at the time of repenting, be as strong as possible although it may become weak later when desire will predominate. Its completion is inconceivable without the repentant's adopting a life of retirement and silence, eating and sleeping little and taking only lawful food. Resolve to act related to the past is completed by the atonement of all the sins that were committed from the time of maturity to the day of repentance. Various methods of making investigation into them along with the principles of atonement have been mentioned by al-Ghazālī who is here following al-Muhāsibī very closely. Total neglect or incomplete performance of the obligatory acts

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1. I.D., IV, 44-45; K.S., pp. 649, 653.

2. I.D., IV, 30-31; K.S., pp. 658-59, 649.

of devotion are to be atoned for by performing them with a broken and contrite heart. Atonement of a grave or venial sin is by regret for committing it and by doing the deed that is opposite (<sup>a</sup>did) to it; (the reason why the opposite deed is needed has already been stated); the duration of doing the opposite deed should be the same as that of the sin; an hour's enjoyment of immoral music, for example, needs to be atoned for by an hour's listening to the Qur'ān. Atonement of any harm done to one's fellow human beings consists of two things - one is regretting and doing the deed opposite to it e.g. giving the poor lawful wealth for wrongly taking away someone's wealth; the other is seeking forgiveness from the person harmed or from his heirs if he has passed away.<sup>1</sup>

When the elements of knowledge, contrition and resolve to act are complete in the way mentioned above, repentance becomes necessarily acceptable (maqbūl) to God. The soul which lost its purity as a result of the influence of sin on it, regains it now; in consequence of the effect on it of contrition and of the good deeds contrary to the sins committed, the soul becomes clean and purified, and it is such a soul that is worthy of finding a place in God's presence and enjoying supreme happiness.<sup>2</sup> For perfect repentance, patience is needed in addition to the knowledge already explained; it is needed in controlling the desire for sin and removing unwillingness to fulfil obligations; since repentance is thus dependent upon patience, the virtue, al-Ghazālī says, that should be dealt with immediately after it is patience.<sup>3</sup>

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1. I.D., IV, 30-34, 44-50; K.S., pp.660-61.

2. I.D., IV, 11-12, 13-14; K.S., pp. 653-55.

3. I.D., IV, 43, 50; K.S., p.665.

## Patience

Patience (sabr) is the second mystical virtue of the means-group. In addition to this, it is described as an attribute of God.<sup>1</sup> In the account of the basic virtues patience was treated by al-Ghazālī very briefly after the manner of the philosopher, but now it is being discussed elaborately as a 'station' of the mystic path. Like repentance it is completed by the three elements of knowledge, disposition produced in the soul as a result of knowledge, and action proceeding from the disposition. More precisely, however, patience refers to the disposition; knowledge and action being its cause and effect respectively.<sup>2</sup> What al-Ghazālī states about these three elements of patience is linked with his theory of the faculties of the human soul discussed in a previous chapter. Besides the intellect, he maintains, there is a faculty (quwwa) in the soul whose function is to control the faculties of appetite and anger. This controlling quality (sifr) of the soul he calls the motive of religion (bā'ith ad-dīn) and the claim (mutālība) of the appetites and anger the motive of passion (bā'ith al-hawā); the two motives have always been at war with one another, inasmuch as that in the case of every action one of them impels man to do it and the other impels him not to do it. The steadiness (thabāt) of the motive of religion in such opposition to the motive of passion is the disposition to which the virtue of patience precisely refers. This steadiness is a result of the knowledge of the fact that passions are in contradiction to the means to 'happiness' in this world as well as in the next, that they are man's

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1. M.M., p. 97.

2. I.D., IV, 155 line 5, 31, 58 line 6.

enemies, inasmuch as they deter him from the path to God. The better is this knowledge of the evil consequence of submitting to passions, the more firm and steady the motive of religion becomes. When this motive is firm, the course of action demanded by the motive of passion is abandoned and the one contrary to it is adopted; this proceeding of action from the disposition is, strictly speaking, the virtue of patience.<sup>1</sup>

This patience which is the restraining the demands of the appetites and anger is called by al-Ghazālī mental patience (as-sabr en-nafsī) and is regarded by him as more perfect than bodily patience (as-sabr al-badānī) which is the endurance of physical pain felt in the performance of devotional and non-devotional acts and in disease and injury. Endurance of bodily pain is commendable only when it is necessitated by the Sharī'a. Mental patience functions in various channels; it is required against excessive desire for food and sex. In misfortune it is required against violent outburst of passions in the form of crying, tearing of clothes and so on. It is needed to restrain the greed for wealth. Firmness of mind is also required in the battlefield, in restraining anger, in keeping others' secrets concealed, in abandoning what is superfluous i.e. in asceticism, and so on. Thus most of the good qualities of the soul are dependent upon patience. Its importance as a means-virtue, is, therefore, very great.<sup>2</sup>

Patience is needed throughout the whole life. This is so because at every stage of life a man is concerned either with something that is agreeable to his lower nature or with something

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1. I.D., IV, 55-57, 59-60; K.S., pp.666-68. 2. I.D., IV, 58-59.



disagreeable, and in each case he is in need of patience. The agreeable things are such as wealth, fame, health etc., and non-observance of patience in these leads man to insolence and evil deeds. Patience in these is not to lean on or rejoice in these and not to use them for worldly pleasure. The things disagreeable to his lower nature are (a) things that in man's power (ikhtiyar) e.g. devotional acts and sin, (b) things which are not in his power and (c) things whose occurrence is not in his power but whose repelling is. Now, patience in devotional acts is needed because the carnal soul (nafs)<sup>is unwilling to</sup> wills their performance. It is needed before them, within them and after them - before starting them is in making the intentions for them completely pure from hypocrisy, within them is in observing all the obligatory and supererogatory parts of them with both their external and internal aspects, after finishing them is in not expressing them from desire for fame and not feeling vainglorious. In refraining from sin, too, patience is needed because the carnal soul is by nature prone to it. As for the things whose occurrence is not in man's choice but whose repelling is e.g. harm from others in different forms, patience is needed in them in not taking any revenge for them at all or in taking revenge only in proportion to the harm done (mukāfā'); enduring harm from others is a high level of patience. The things which are not in man's power at all are misfortunes and calamities like the death of children, loss of wealth, paralysing of any organ; patience in these is the most excellent kind of patience and this can only be attained by the most devout; mental pain, or silent tears in misfortune is not incompatible with this kind of patience since these are natural for man; this patience is, of course, lost by violent

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outbursts of passion and by complaints to others. Thus at every step of life, man is in need of patience. Even when a mystic has completely controlled his passions and adopted solitude (ʿuzla), he needs it in effecting perseverance in his control over them and in repelling diabolic suggestions from his mind and different passing thoughts that come to it in solitude and prevent him from remembering God.<sup>1</sup>

Although patience is needed at every stage of life, the need for it in all the life-situations is not the same. In some it is obligatory, while in others it is supererogatory. Patience in abstinence from those deeds which the Sharīʿa made unlawful is obligatory. It is supererogatory in doing those good deeds which are disliked by natural passions (makāriḥ) and this is appropriate to the 'especial few'. There are two situations where patience is condemnable. One of them is in receiving an injury that is unlawful in the Sharīʿa e.g. when a man's own hand or that of his child is being cut off by an oppressor. The other is in receiving an injury that is disliked in the Sharīʿa. In a particular situation whether patience is needed or not, and, if needed, whether it is obligatory or supererogatory will all be determined by the Sharīʿa.<sup>2</sup>

Patience as a mystical virtue can only be said to have been acquired by a novice when he can exercise it in all the situations demanding it, not with much pain but with little exertion of his carnal soul, for this shows that his religious motive has become so strong that it cannot be overcome by his motive of passion at all. (The conception of pleasure as the criterion of acquiring

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1. I.D., IV, 60-65, 62; K.S., pp.669-73.

2. I.D., IV, 60.

a character-trait has already been treated in detail.) If he can observe patience only in some situations but not in all, or if he can observe it in all the situations with much and not little pain, his motive of religion has not become strong enough; he is just learning patience (tasabbar) and has not yet acquired it. The motive of religion gets strength from the practice of patience as from certain knowledge about the evil consequences of following passions. After the exercise of patience with pain and difficulty for a long time, the religious impulse becomes strong so that patience in all circumstances becomes easy. Endurance of pain is not possible all the time; it is possible only when the fear of God is dominant in the soul. Therefore the virtue that deserves consideration after patience is fear of God.<sup>1</sup>

But al-Ghazālī, like al-Makkī,<sup>2</sup> takes up the virtue of gratitude for discussion because it is inseparably related to patience. Concerning the relation he points out that two things - affliction (balā') and bounty (ni'ma) - come to man in his life demanding appropriate responses from him. When affliction befalls him, his response should, at least, be in the form of patience (it is, of course, better to express gratitude even in such condition - a view that has been justified on several grounds).<sup>3</sup> But when bounty is bestowed upon him, he must respond to it by expressing gratitude to its bestower. Al-Ghazālī says that if this relation did not exist between patience and gratitude, he would have treated the latter not with patience but with other

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1. I.D., IV, 59-60; K.S., pp.674-75.

2. Qūt, I, 411-13.

3. I.D., IV, 110-16; K.S., pp.693-94.

end-virtues for it is one of them.<sup>1</sup>

### Gratitude

Gratitude (shukr) to God is considered by al-Ghazālī as one of the higher 'stations' of the path leading the novice near to God; its high place in the path he proves by means of Qur'ānic verses and prophetic traditions. Since it belongs to the end-group of the mystical virtues, it is to be acquired by the novice later and, if acquired, it will remain in the soul in the hereafter in virtue of which those who are 'happy' will be expressing gratitude to God there too. To give a complete description of gratitude al-Ghazālī speaks of it in terms of the three elements that make up most of the mystical virtues, i.e. knowledge, disposition and action. Gratitude to God is for the gift (ni'ma) He bestows upon man, and so knowledge here is of the fact that every gift is ultimately from Him. This knowledge produces in the soul the disposition of rejoicing in the Benefactor (mun'im) - a rejoicing mingled with a sense of submission and humility towards Him. From this disposition of joy proceeds action which is to use every gift for the purpose for which the Benefactor has given it. These three elements complete the virtue of gratitude although what it precisely refers to is the element of disposition. The definitions of gratitude by al-Junayd, Hamdūn, al-Qaṣṣār and others include only one or two of these elements and so al-Ghazālī rejects them as incomplete.<sup>2</sup>

Since clear apprehension of the real nature of gratitude to God depends upon clearly understanding the three elements of it,<sup>3</sup>

1. K.S., pp.675, 694, 669.

3. K.S., pp. 676-77.

2. I.D., IV, 71, 73; K.S., pp.675, 676-77.

al-Ghazālī proceeds to explain them one by one. Knowledge, the cause of gratitude, is, he says, linked with the concept of divine unity (tawhīd) and sanctification (tagdīs) and is attainable only after them. The gist of this knowledge is that gifts come from God and no-one has any partnership with Him in bestowing them. The intermediate causes (asbāb, wasā'it) of a gift lying between man and God are only appointed (musakhkhar) by Him so that they work on His behalf; they can only do what they are commanded by Him. When an individual, for example, benefits another with his wealth, he is bound to do so inasmuch as God created in Him a will to that effect; therefore, it is God Who is the real Benefactor, Who gives the benefit through the alms-giver. This knowledge is necessary for perfect gratitude because it is only from such knowledge that the soul can rejoice only in the Benefactor, in which case gratitude is felt towards Him alone. But if one knows the gift to have come from intermediary causes, one's gratitude will be given to them only; if one believes that they have some role to play in bestowing the gift, one's gratitude will be directed towards them too in which case gratitude to God alone will be incomplete. For these reasons the knowledge that every benefit comes from God and from no other is very necessary, so necessary that at times al-Ghazālī calls this alone the virtue of gratitude.<sup>1</sup>

The disposition which is precisely the mystical quality of gratitude is the joy produced by the knowledge of gift. In order to be a perfect disposition, this joy which is mingled with a feeling of submission and humility should be towards God alone

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1. I.D., IV, 71-72; K.S., p.677.



and should come to the mind from the realisation that the gift received from Him will serve as means to draw near to Him. This perfect disposition is possessed by the mystics and the most devout and its sign is that they are joyful only when they receive those things of the world which help them in reaching the goal. A man's joy may be because he realises that the gift he received is something enjoyable and accords with his need; this joy is not the disposition of gratitude, since it is not towards the Benefactor in any sense. Again, joy may be towards the Benefactor not because the gift received from Him is a thing of enjoyment, but because he realizes that it proves that God is pleased with him and will give him more benefit in the future; this is a disposition of gratitude no doubt but this disposition is of lower grade and possessed by the pious who worship God and offer Him thanks in the hope of rewards from Him in the future life.<sup>1</sup>

Action proceeding from the disposition of gratitude is by the soul, by the tongue and by the members. Action of the soul is to desire good for all. Action by the tongue is to express joy towards the Benefactor through such sentences as 'all praise be to God' (al-hamdu li-Allāh). Action of the members consists in using God's gifts for the purposes for which He gave them. To use them for any other purpose or not to use them at all is ingratitude. Thus the purpose of creating the hand is to repel what is harmful and to grasp the useful; if it is used in committing sin or is not used where it should be used, this is ingratitude to God in regard to this gift. Men of insight

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1. I.D., IV, 72; K.S., pp.678-79.

(ahl al-basā'ir) can know God's purpose in creating each gift by reflection and inspiration (ilhām), while the common men who have a lower grade of intellect can know it from the Shari'a. In general, it may be said that each gift is given so that man may work by it for the hereafter; therefore it is only by using it for that end that one can become grateful to God.<sup>1</sup>

Because gratitude is incumbent upon man for the gift he receives, al-Ghazālī states what gift really means and what its forms are. In support of his view that gifts are innumerable he quotes the Qur'ānic verse, "And if you count Allāh's favours, you will not be able to number them; most surely man is very unjust and very ungrateful." Some of them are hidden, others are manifest; some are common to all human beings e.g. air, water, sun-rays etc., while others are particular to a few people such as wealth, honour, or to a single individual. In regard to the meaning of gift, al-Ghazālī says that what is useful in this world and the next is a gift in the real sense of the term; such things are only two, namely, knowledge and good action. What is painful in this world but pleasure-giving in the next is also a gift. In most of the things of this world there exist both benefit and harm from the viewpoint of the hereafter; if the benefit of a thing is greater than its harm, it should be reckoned as a gift; the amount of benefit and harm varies from person to person, and so a thing may be a gift for someone but affliction for another person. Only those things of the world that serve as means to 'happiness' are gifts. These are innumerable out of which al-Ghazālī selects sixteen and discusses them in detail.<sup>2</sup>

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1. I.D., IV, 73, 78, 76; K.S., pp.679-80, 673.

2. K.S., pp.685-86, 688-89; I.D., IV, 86-94.

At the end of his discussion on gratitude al-Ghazali does not speak of the virtue that should follow it. The reason is that he has already pointed out that what should follow after 'patience' is the virtue of the fear of God, but instead of discussing it he dealt with 'gratitude' for an especial reason already considered. Now that the discussion on 'gratitude' is finished he goes on to treat 'fear'<sup>1</sup> without feeling any need to repeat his reason. Since he sees a link between 'fear' and 'hope' he considers both together. Of these, however, 'fear' deserves the first consideration because this is its true position and because hope is better than fear, when they are judged from this point of view of their sources<sup>2</sup>; (a rule in mysticism is that what is higher should be discussed later). But he discusses 'hope' first, an arrangement that accords with that of al-Makkī,<sup>3</sup> because it has similarity with the preceding virtue, 'gratitude'. The similarity is that both are related to the same attributes of God, i.e. mercy and kindness which attract man to His love.<sup>4</sup> In the Arba'in, however, the treatment of hope is to be found within the discussion of fear<sup>5</sup> and not before it in a separate section.

#### Hope

The virtues of hope (naġā') and fear (khawf) are compared by al-Ghazālī to "two wings by means of which those who are brought

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1. In the A.D., pp.181-82, however, 'fear' is placed after 'repentance'.

2. I.D., IV, 125; K.S., p.695. To al-Makkī, however, fear is higher than hope; see Qūt, I, 456.

3. Al-Makkī, Qūt, I, 432, 457.

4. I.D., IV, 145; K.S., p.718, 695.

5. p.182.

near (to God) fly to every praiseworthy station (of the path)".<sup>1</sup> Clearly, unlike any other means-virtue which, in addition to being means to all the end-virtues, is a means to one or two means-virtues other than itself, fear and hope, besides the former's being especially related to patience, are means to all the virtues other than themselves. To facilitate the discussion of their nature as mystical virtues, al-Ghazālī first states the general meaning of hope and fear. In regard to hope he says that it refers to the joy (irtiyāh) of the mind which results from its anticipation of anything that it esteems desirable.<sup>2</sup> There must be means to such a thing, and if the mind expects it on the ground that most of the means have been obtained, it is reasonable to call this anticipation hope. But if the anticipation of the thing is made despite fulfilling the means defectively and in a disorderly way, it should be called delusion (gharūr) and stupidity (humuq) and not hope. If the means to the thing are unknown as existent or non-existent, the expectation of it should be called wishful thinking (tamannī) because this is an expectation without any reason for making it. Legitimate hope, then, is expectation of a desirable thing after fulfilling all the means to it that are within man's power.<sup>3</sup>

Similar to this is the nature of hope as a mystical virtue. Should a novice strengthen his 'faith' by means of devotional acts, purify the soul from blameworthy qualities and then expect that God, out of mercy, will strengthen him in this way of life

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1. I.D., IV, 123; a similar sentence is to be found in the Kīmīyā, p.695.

2. Cf Avicenna, Akhlāq, p.24.

3. I.D., IV, 123-24; K.S., pp.695, 697-9.

until death and grant him a 'good end' (husn al-khātima) which leads to forgiveness. This expectation of his can be called real hope, and this will cause him to persevere in good deeds to the last hour of his life, completing thereby the means to mercy; but if he neglects the act of strengthening the 'faith' or leaves the soul unpurified and is engrossed in worldly pleasures and expects that God will forgive him, this expectation of his is mere delusion and stupidity. The real hope of mercy which is cherished after obtaining the means to it and which causes man to remain moral throughout the rest of his life, is a disposition of the soul which is aroused by knowledge and which, in turn, necessitates action. Thus, the virtue of hope too consists of the three elements necessary for each 'station' on the path to God. By knowledge is here meant man's awareness of obtaining most of the means to mercy, and by action the best possible effort in performing devotional acts, which constitutes the remaining part of means to mercy. This effort is a necessary part of real hope because the opposite of hope, despair, is blameworthy for the reason that there is no activity in it. Among the signs of real hope are feeling pleasure in working to attain nearness to God, joy in secret converse with Him and fondness in praising Him with humility. Should these signs be absent in a novice he cannot be said to have acquired the virtue of hope; he is deluded and has given way to wishful thinking.<sup>1</sup>

Hope of mercy should be at the stage not of excess or deficiency but of the mean (wast). Hope is the first of the two mystical virtues, the other being 'fear', to which al-Ghazālī

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1. I.D., IV, 124-25; K.S., pp.697-98.



applies the doctrine of mean - a doctrine that was found to be so important in his conception of basic virtues and vices. But while in that place he used the doctrine sometimes for practical motives and sometimes for other-worldly purposes, he here uses it purely for the former. He says that it is only when hope is at the mean state that its purpose which is to energize the novice for knowledge and action can be best fulfilled. If hope is excessive, it becomes sloth and laziness. If it is deficient it borders on despair which deprives its possessor of knowledge and action. Thus both excess and deficiency are bad and should be remedied by appropriate means. Excessive hope can be reduced by reading the Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions on fear. Some of those whose hope of mercy deviates too much towards the <sup>extreme</sup> excess of deficiency are in despair and they abandon devotional acts and repentance from sin; others keep themselves so busy in them that they harm themselves and their families. Hope in both groups of people should be increased to the state of equilibrium and this can be achieved in two ways. One is reflection on the innumerable types of gifts (ni'am) that God has bestowed upon man; this will enable them to realize how kind He is in this world and this realization will create in their mind the hope that in the next world too He will show such kindness to man. This reflection is, of course, difficult on the part of common men who, therefore, need to follow the second way which consists in reading the Qur'anic verses, prophetic traditions and sayings of mystics and saints about the hope of God's forgiveness in the hereafter.<sup>1</sup>

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1. I.D., IV, 127, 135; K.S., pp.698-703.

## Fear

While hope in general refers to the joy of the soul when it expects something desirable, fear is the soul's experience of pain when it anticipates something harmful.<sup>1</sup> The painful feeling is aroused in a man's mind by his knowledge that the harmful thing will overtake him and the intensity of this feeling is in proportion to the strength of this knowledge. So long as this feeling exists certain actions are caused by this necessarily. This is the nature of fear in general, and similar to this is the nature of fear in mysticism. As a mystical virtue fear refers to the fear of God. It is the soul's experiencing pain when a novice knows (a) God's attributes of majesty, power and absolute independence so that if He destroys the whole universe none can destroy Him, or (b) his sins, defects in his good deeds and the blameworthy qualities of his soul and the punishment for all these, or (c) both i.e. his sin and God's majestic attributes. On the strength of his knowledge of these depends the strength of his feeling of pain. This feeling influences both the body and the soul. In the former, it produces pallidness, fainting, shrieking, weeping and sometimes it even causes death; instead of committing sins the members become engaged in devotional acts and in making up for the excess made in the past. The effect of fear on the soul is that desire for worldly enjoyment and sin disappears; modesty, humility and submission to God come to the soul, and pride, rancour and, in short, tendency to evil leave it; self-examination, vigilance and anxiety about the 'end', occupy the mind. When desires are controlled, the virtue of temperance ('iffa) is achieved. The lowest grade of fear

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1. Cf. Avicenna, Akhlāq, p.26.

is what keeps man from all that is unlawful; this is called abstinence (wara'). A higher grade of fear restrains man from what is doubtful; this is called piety (taqwā). Man at the highest grade abstains from what is not unlawful lest he fall<sup>1</sup> into what is unlawful; this is called truthfulness (sidq). Such a man does not build a house which is not necessary for him, nor amass wealth which is not necessary for his sustenance, he becomes indifferent to the world, knowing that he will have to leave it behind and does not spend any moment on things other than God. Then, the knowledge of sin or of the majestic attributes of God or of both is what produces in the soul a painful feeling which is the disposition of the mystical virtue of fear, from which proceed the above-mentioned actions of the body and the soul.<sup>1</sup>

Objects of fear are things abhorrent in themselves such as Hell-fire or things not abhorrent in themselves but causing things that are abhorrent. Difference of worth among those who are at the 'station' of fear is owing to the difference of worth among the abhorred things. The fearful things of the second group are many. Some of them are death before repentance, imperfection in it, diminishing of enthusiasm for devotional acts, replacement of the gentleness of mind by hardness (qasāwa), deviation from uprightness, dominance of desire for sin, bewilderment at God's enormous gift, diversion from God to things other than Him, exposing of disgrace and shame on the Resurrection Day, God's awareness when one's mind is heedless of Him, 'evil end' i.e. losing the 'faith' at death; and so on. All these are the objects of the mystics' fear. The fear of 'evil end' becomes most dominant in them and this is the

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1. I.D., IV, 135-36; K.S., pp.704-08.

most perfect fear. The fearful things of the first group are the pangs of death, interrogation of Mānkār and Nakīr and punishment in the grave, terror of Resurrection, awēfulness of standing before God and His interrogation, sharpness of the Bridge and the difficulty in crossing over it, Hell and its shackles and terrors, deprivation of Paradise or diminution of grade in it, veiling from God, and so on. Of all these, the fear of the veil is most dominant in the mystics. The pious fear sin and crime, whereas the mystics fear God Himself because of His majesty and the attributes that demand awe necessarily. The latter fear is higher in grade and more perfect because it remains always, whereas the fear of sin disappears after its abandonment. One who knows God and His attributes knows that some of them cause Him to be feared even though one were free from sin; for if the sinner knows God truly, he will fear Him and not the sin.<sup>1</sup>

Fear of these things is only commendable when it is at the mean-state because it is only such fear that leads one to knowledge and good deeds - a thing that is the purpose of fear as a mystical quality. The man in whom fear is at the state of deficiency tends towards effeminate softness which pervades his mind whenever he hears a Qur'ānic verse on fear and he begins to weep; but after a while his mind becomes heedless. This fear is of little use for it cannot lead to knowledge and action. Excessive fear, on the other hand, creates despair; this too is bad because it causes disease, depression, bewilderment and intellectual atrophy and sometimes even death; all these are bars to knowledge and action. Thus both deficiency and excess of fear obstruct the realization of

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1. I.D., IV, 150, 151; K.S., pp.707, 709-11.

the purpose of fear as a 'station' of the path and, therefore, need to be remedied. The remedy for excessive fear is the same as that for deficiency of 'hope' which has already been stated. The remedy for deficiency of fear is man's knowledge of himself and of God - himself as helpless and sinful and God as great, etc.; this knowledge necessarily creates fear in the mind. One unable to have this knowledge should associate with those who have acquired the virtue of fear so that the fear in them will spread (sarāyat) to him. If such persons are not available, reading the books concerning the fear of the prophets, angels and fathers will suffice him.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Ghazālī deals with the question - which of the two virtues of fear and hope is better and should be made more dominant in the soul? He says that if they are judged from their sources, hope is found to be the better and so serving God in the hope of reward should be regarded as better than serving Him for fear of punishment. Since hope and fear are two means-virtues, the appropriate question, al-Ghazālī says, is not which of them is better but which is more useful. The answer to this question is, in his view, not the same for all. For a man who feels security from God's wrath fear is more useful, but if a man is in despair of His mercy, hope should be made more dominant in his soul. If a tendency to evil is strong in a person, fear is more needed for him, but if this tendency is completely controlled, an equal amount of fear and hope should exist in the soul. In view of the fact that in most people a tendency to sin is dominant, it can be said absolutely that fear is more useful provided it does not border on despair. Thus the need for fear is, according to al-Ghazālī, greater than

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1. I.D., IV, 146-47; K.S., pp.708-09, 713-14.



that for hope and it is for this reason that in the Arbaʿīn only fear is mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Ghazālī does not mention the reason why he passes on to 'asceticism' and not to any other means-virtues when he has concluded his discussion on fear, but he explains this when he shows how all the mystical virtues other than 'love' lead the novice to it. Here he points out that asceticism and patience are impossible without fear and hope.<sup>2</sup> (This relation of fear and hope to these two virtues is conceived as especial as against their general relation to all the mystical 'stations' other than themselves.) Since asceticism is dependent upon fear al-Ghazālī finds it logical to discuss it after fear in all his ethical works dealing with the stations of the path.

#### Asceticism

Asceticism (zuhd) belongs to the means-group of the mystical virtues. It is regarded by al-Ghazālī as a noble (sharīf) station of the path to God. Like other stations, it, too, is described as composed of knowledge, disposition and action. The nature of this virtue he states by first stating the meaning of asceticism in general. Its meaning is the turning away of desire (raghba) from a thing to some other thing better than that. Thus there are two elements in asceticism, namely, that from which desire is turned away (marghūb ʿanhu) and that to which it is turned (marghūb fihi). While it is necessary that the former should be desirable, the latter should be of more value. In the light of this it can be said that abandonment of this world in favour of the next is asceticism and the abandonment of the next world in favour of this world is also

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1. I.D., IV, 144-45; K.S., pp. 695, 704, 718. 2. I.D., IV, 271.

asceticism. But asceticism as a mystical virtue refers especially to the rejection of this world in favour of the next. The phrase 'this world' here means those permissible things of the world (mubāhāt, halāl) which form the objects of the carnal soul's pleasure (huzūz an-nafs). Abandonment of the legally forbidden things is not the mystical virtue of asceticism for this is obligatory upon everyone; abandonment of the doubtful things, too, is not asceticism for this is accomplished only by the pious. In asceticism permissible things must be rejected despite the ability to enjoy them. This stipulation distinguishes it from poverty, for in the former rejection of worldly things is after their possession but in the latter they are not possessed at all. Again, in asceticism abandonment of a thing is by regarding it as contemptible in comparison to the delights of the hereafter that will be obtained in exchange for it; hence giving away for the sake of liberality, magnificence, name and fame is not asceticism, for this is done by those who do not believe in the hereafter or who do not *want* happiness in it.<sup>1</sup>

The knowledge required for asceticism is that this world is insignificant in comparison to the next, for the delights of the former are transitory and very much inferior to those of the latter. On the strength of this knowledge depends the strength of the disposition of asceticism. Despite possessing this knowledge many do not reject the world because their 'faith' is weak and because their desire for this worldly enjoyment is dominant. They procrastinate and <sup>k</sup>make delay in turning to the next.<sup>2</sup> The action

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1. I.D., IV, 197-98; K.S., pp. 836, 871, 832-33.

2. I.D., IV, 187-88; K.S., pp. 730-31, 732.

proceeding from the disposition of asceticism is practically abandoning the world and being attentive to the next; it is to refrain from enjoying the world including all its means. An ascetic stops his bodily members from committing sins and employs them in all supererogatory and obligatory good deeds. Indifference to this world and attention to the next are the two stipulations of the action of asceticism. Abandonment of some worldly things and not of all is asceticism no doubt but it is not absolute asceticism.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Ghazālī speaks of three grades of asceticism on the basis of its purpose. The lowest grade is to abandon the world in order to escape from punishment in the next world. This is the asceticism of those in whom fear predominates (khā'ifūn). Higher than this is to abandon the world with a view to obtaining the reward to be given for it in the next world. This is higher because this is connected with love of God and this is appropriate to those in whom hope is predominant (rājūn). The highest grade in forsaking the world is neither for fear nor for hope but only for love of God. The mystics, the lovers of God, are at this grade for it is they who regard as negligible all things other than God.<sup>2</sup> Al-Ghazālī describes another four grades of asceticism on the basis of the things abandoned. At the highest grade one abandons everything save God i.e. this world and also the delights of the next; this is absolute asceticism. At a lower grade one abandons all those things which give pleasure to the carnal soul and which are not needed in travelling on the path to God. This is the complete abandonment of the world, because the world refers to all that is

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1. I.D., IV, 188-89; K.S., pp.836, 831.

2. K.S., p.731; I.D. IV, 195-96.

self-pleasing except when its purpose is the hereafter. The third grade is to abandon not every means of self-pleasing but only wealth and 'influence' together with all the means to them. It is upon these two that most self-pleasing is dependent. Forsaking these means ~~forsaking~~ that measure of them which is not needed for the hereafter. The fourth grade is to shun knowledge and power, gold and silver, for the last two are the chief forms of wealth and the first two the chief forms of 'fame'. This knowledge is that which is acquired for gaining 'fame' from others. Just as repentance from one sin is not fruitless so is asceticism ~~from one form of~~ self-pleasing. Complete asceticism, however, is turning away from all those carnal soul's pleasures which are not needed for the purpose of the next world; such things hinder the novice from travelling on the 'path'. To support this view al-Ghazālī quotes Abū-Sulaymān Dārānī's definition that asceticism is giving up everything that comes between a man and God.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Ghazālī makes it explicit that asceticism is not dependent upon 'trust'; rather the fact is the reverse.<sup>2</sup> This confirms what he said earlier that asceticism is a means-virtue while 'trust' is an end-virtue. As a means-virtue the former is no doubt an aid to all the end-virtues including 'trust', but it is an aid especially to 'trust' and hence the virtue that deserves treatment after it is 'trust', but in the Kīmīyā al-Ghazālī does not discuss 'trust' after it<sup>3</sup> because he has not yet completed the exposition of all

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1. I.D., IV, 197-97; K.S., p. 736.

2. K.S., p. 813; I.D., IV, 241, 231.

3. In the I.D., however, he discusses trust after asceticism. For an explanation of this see supra, pp. 83-84. In the A.D., patience is dealt with after asceticism for the reason already mentioned. (p. 21d)

the means-virtues, whereas he has already set the rule that the discussion of the means-virtues should precede that of the end-virtues. Therefore, leaving aside the claim of 'trust' he begins to deal with three means-virtues - intention, sincerity and truthfulness - together. One may ask here why he deals with these three and not with any other means-virtues, which, like these three, await discussion. Al-Ghazālī does not say anything that may provide an answer to this question. The most likely answer is that since an ascetic is held in high esteem men may feel tempted to abandon this world for this reason and not for other-worldly delights. To guard against this temptation they need to know the nature and excellence of sincere and true intention.

#### Intention

Al-Ghazālī sees intention, sincerity and truthfulness - three means-virtues - inseparably related to each other, and so he treats them together. The relation that he finds among them is that intention (niyya) is a basic requirement of devotional acts for without it action is useless in the sense that no effect on the soul is produced by it; intention without sincerity (ikhlaṣ) does produce effect, but this effect is harmful to the soul; sincerity without truthfulness (ṣidq) and reality (ḥaqīqa) is obviously in vain.<sup>1</sup> Because it is only action with truly sincere intention that is useful to the novice in his task of beautifying the inward self (bātin), in mysticism great emphasis is laid upon sincerity and truthfulness, and al-Ghazālī even goes so far as to call them means to salvation (asbāb an-najāt).<sup>2</sup>

In Traditions intention is described as that on which the

1. I.D., IV, 309; K.S., p. 763.

2. I.D., IV, 309.



worth of action is dependent and good intention is said to be good by itself, that is, even though it is not actualized into action owing to a certain obstacle ('ā'iḡ). Considering intention as a mystical virtue, al-Ghazālī gives an account of it in the same way as he gives account of other mystical virtues and interprets the Traditions on it in the light of his mysticism. Its nature he states in terms of the three elements of knowledge, disposition and action. Of these the disposition is precisely what he means by intention, while knowledge and action he reckons as its cause and effect respectively. When a man knows with all certainty that a certain thing is useful to him whether in this world or in the next and he feels that it is necessary for him to do it, there hastens to his soul the will (irāda) to accomplish it, which moves the power (qudra) in the body to set the organs in action. This will or resolve (ḡasd) is the disposition referred to as intention; resolve, will and intention thus mean the same thing in al-Ghazālī. Rousing of the power to move the organs is the action proceeding from the disposition. This action has sometimes a single motive (bā'ith) behind it and sometimes two. In the latter case there may be three possibilities - each of the motives may be so powerful that by itself it can cause the action to happen or so weak that it cannot cause the action unless it is joined with the other, or one of them may be such that it alone is capable of bringing about the act but when the other is mingled with it it is aided by it. The second motive in these three cases may respectively be called a companion (rafiḡ), a partner (shariḡ) and an assistant (mu'īn) of the first.<sup>1</sup> This doctrine of single versus double motive is of

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1. I.D., IV, 312-13; K.S., pp.744-45.

especial importance in sufi ethics because with it is related the mystical virtue of sincerity.

Al-Ghazālī maintains that if the performance of devotional acts is to serve its purpose in moral life it must be with intention. Good intention creates in the soul an inclination (mayl) to God and the hereafter and a deviation from love of the world, and these are only strengthened and confirmed if action according to it is performed; it is the strengthening of the inclination already produced by intention that is the purpose of the performance of action. Action without intention and unmindful action are both absolutely useless for they leave no effect on the soul and hence their existence is like non-existence. But good intention is good even though it is not acted upon, for it has made the soul inclined to good and turned it away from the world; of course, this inclination would have only been confirmed if the act were performed. By intention al-Ghazālī does not mean passing thought or mere wish to do something good, but a firm determination ('azm an-niyya wa'l-himma) which is later impeded by some external causes (al-asbāb al-khārija).<sup>1</sup> Something very similar to this is to be found in Kant's famous theory of good will. There is, however, no evidence that he studied al-Ghazālī or the Traditions which form the ultimate source of al-Ghazālī's conception.

The assertion that action depends upon intention is applicable to good and neutral acts and not to evil ones. Bad deeds are bad even though they are done with good intention. Good actions are turned into evil ones if they are performed with evil motives. Neutral deeds like using scent and taking food are changed into

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1. I.D., IV, 312, 313-35, 320; K.S., pp.745-47.

good or bad according as the motives behinds them are good or bad. Every neutral act, however small, may be a means of drawing near to God provided it is performed with that intention. Devotional acts are incorrect if worshipping God is not intended by them. The pious worship God for fear of Hell or hope of Paradise but those who are brought near to Him serve Him only to please Him.<sup>1</sup> Making an intention before worship is not merely uttering words like 'I intend to do this act for God'; rather it is to produce a strong inclination of the soul towards him.<sup>2</sup>

### Sincerity

When a devotional act is performed with a single motive and this motive is to attain nothing but nearness (taqarrub) to God, the state of the soul is called sincerity. The highest degree of it is achieved if the only motive behind the act is to please God by means of it; this is the sincerity of the most devout. If the only motive is to enjoy the delights of Paradise or to escape the punishment of Hell, sincerity will be of a lower grade. Performing a devotional act purely for a worldly motive or performing it primarily in order to achieve nearness to God and mingling with it a worldly or selfish motive (bā'ith an-nafs) means that there is no sincerity in it. Thus a person who is giving alms to a beggar for the sole purpose of pleasing God is a sincere (mukhlis) man; should he give to him only to cease being annoyed by him or both to get rid of him and to please God, he is not to be regarded as sincere. A worldly motive may, as already stated, be mingled with that of nearness to God as its companion, partner or assistant,

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1. I.D., IV, 315-17, 319, 320; K.S., pp.749-51, 754.

2. I.D., IV, 319-21; K.S., p.752.

and in sincerity the motive of attaining nearness to God must be completely free from the motive of the self-pleasing in any of these three forms. Mingling is sometimes manifest and sometimes hidden; often it is so subtle that the devotee feels that he is performing the act purely to please God, but in reality he is performing it for some other reason.<sup>1</sup>

To purify the motive of nearness to God from any other motive, small or great, is very difficult but not absolutely impossible. It becomes possible for the man who has succeeded in totally removing love of the world from his soul and replacing it by so strong a love of the hereafter that he remains engrossed in the thought of the next world. Not only his acts of devotion but all his actions and inactions are motivated by seeking nearness to God. He eats, drinks, sleeps and does all other neutral deeds not for enjoyment but for acquiring strength for worshipping God, and hence he limits himself to that measure of them which is necessary for that purpose. Every act of his even though it is his going to the lavatory becomes a sincere act. If, on the other hand, love of the world particularly that of high status or power predominates in the soul, even his intentions behind such major devotional acts as ritual prayer and fasting very rarely become free from worldly motives. Acquisition of sincerity, then, is facilitated by control over the desire for self-pleasing, the removal of worldly love from the soul and the strengthening of the love of the hereafter.<sup>2</sup>

#### Truthfulness

Truthfulness, as a mystical virtue, has a wider connotation than usual. In addition to its being in speech, it is, according

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1. I.D., IV, 324-25, 326-28; K.S., pp.757-59. 2. I.D., IV, 325.

to al-Ghezālī, also in intention, in resolution (‘azm), in the fulfilment of resolution, in action and in all the stations of the path. One who acquires truthfulness in all these in its perfect form is called most truthful (siddiq) and one who acquires it in only some of these is truthful only in relation to what he acquires.<sup>1</sup> The meaning of truthfulness in speech has already been stated.<sup>2</sup> Truthfulness in resolution means firmness and strength in the resolve which man sometimes makes for doing good deeds when opportunity arises. An individual, for example, resolves to give away half of his wealth if he should become very wealthy. Truthfulness here means completeness and strength; a truthful or most truthful person is the one whose resolution for all good deeds is strong and complete. Truthfulness in fulfilling resolution means that when the opportunity for action comes, one who resolved to act does actually do so. Truthfulness in action requires that a man's outward self is in conformity with his inward self; if the outward self is better, even though unconsciously, his truthfulness in action is lost. The term unconsciously is significant here; it distinguishes the loss of truthfulness from hypocrisy in which the outward self is consciously shown to be better. Then, if a man's external behaviour is such that it indicates the presence in him of a quality which is not really present, he falls short of being among the most truthful, but he does not thereby become a hypocrite so long as his external behaviour is unconscious. Truthfulness in the stations of the path refers to their perfection. Each station has its beginning and end or perfection and between the two there exists a long range. An ordinary believer possesses

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1. I.D., IV, 331; K.S., p.761.

2. See supra, pp. 43-45.



all the qualities that are known as 'stations' but is not truthful in them i.e. the qualities are weak in him. That man is most truthful in them who has acquired all of them in their perfect degree. Such a man is, of course, rare to find.<sup>1</sup> To acquire them in their perfect degree is not an easy task; it requires, among other things, constant watch over the activities of the carnal soul (nafs) and a firm control over it all the time. Al-Ghazālī, therefore, passes on to discuss the virtues of self-examination and vigilance which concern these.

#### Vigilance and self-examination

These two means-virtues are treated by al-Ghazālī together on the ground that they are closely related to each other. They are two aspects of the same task of subduing the carnal soul, the combination of the faculties of desire and anger. In the discussion on patience as a mystical virtue, these two faculties were spoken of as man's enemies inasmuch as they deter him from the path to God and *are* at war with the other faculties of the soul; and hence the need for the firmness of 'the motive of religion' in its opposition to them - a firmness that is called mental patience - throughout the whole life was strongly emphasized. But here in the virtues of vigilance and self-examination the problem of subduing the carnal soul in order that it may reach its goal of nearness to God is discussed in all its aspects. Al-Ghazālī believes that although the carnal soul is rebellious in nature and is hostile to all that is good especially to devotional acts, it can be made agreeable to it if it is kept under the control of the intellect. First the intellect needs to impose upon it

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1. I.D., IV, 331-35; K.S., pp.762-63.

certain tasks and conditions and order it to act in such a way that the soul may reach its goal. Then it should watch at every moment over the activities of the carnal soul and this should be followed by ascertaining whether any such thing has been done by it as may hinder the progress of the soul. If any such thing is done the carnal soul should be punished for it, compelled to struggle against evil and subjected to severe reproach so that it may not do it again. Thus the virtues of vigilance and self-examination consist of six successive steps, namely, imposing conditions (mushārata), vigilance, examination, punishment (mu'āqaba), struggle (mujāhada) and reproach (mu'ātaba). Of these steps what is most important is the step of examination.<sup>1</sup> The need for self-examination and reproach was recognized by philosophers like al-Kindī and Miskawayh who, however, did not discuss them elaborately.<sup>2</sup>

Imposing conditions: the time for it is in the morning. Explaining to the carnal soul the tremendous importance of a lifetime in achieving 'happiness', an individual should urge upon it the utilization of every moment of the day to that purpose. He must warn it against using its instruments, the seven members, in a sinful manner, and order it to use them for the purpose for which they were created. The devotional acts to be performed during the day and the night should be fixed and there should be a great number of supererogatory acts. The carnal soul should seek advice each morning, as has been suggested above, concerning time, members and acts of devotion until it becomes habituated in fulfilling all its duties with pleasure. It needs also to be warned against unjustly

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1. I.D., IV, 336, 346, 355; K.S., p.764. 2. Tahdhib, pp. 170

dealing with the problems of social life. The task of imposing conditions is also called by al-Ghazālī self-examination before action in the sense that it is a warning to the self.<sup>1</sup>

Murāqaba literally means watching someone. As a mystical virtue it is a disposition of the soul which results from knowledge and in turn results in action of the members and of the soul. When an individual knows with certainty that God is aware of all his secret thoughts and outward deeds, there is produced in his soul a disposition of reverence to Him, of being occupied with Him and of directing towards Him all his thoughts and cares. In consequence of this disposition, his thoughts and actions remain correct. There are two grades of vigilance: (a) the vigilance of the most devout is such that his soul is so much engrossed in God's greatness and majesty and so completely possessed by His awe that he is unaware of anything other than Him; such a man does not hear if one talks to him and does not see the one in front of him. This vigilance is short-lived and this is only over the soul's actions; he need not watch over the actions of his body for his members are accustomed to devotional acts and they do not commit even 'the permissible deeds'. (b) The vigilance of the pious man who knows with certainty that God is aware of all his thoughts and actions and <sup>who</sup> feels afraid of Him but is not completely engrossed in His greatness and majesty as the most devout are; he is aware of himself and of the world; he needs to watch each of his voluntary acts at two stages, (1) before beginning to perform it, with a view to ascertaining whether the first thought (khātir, himma) of it has come from God or from the

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1. I.D., IV, 237-38; K.S., pp.764-66.

self or from the devil, and (2) after beginning to perform it. The latter, if it is in a devotional act, concerns his attention and the observance of those internal and external attitudes by which its worth is enhanced, and, if in a 'permissible act', concerns its performance with full courtesy (adab) and that is considering God as the bestower of his ability to perform it and feeling himself to be in His presence.<sup>1</sup>

**Examination:** in the evening the novice should minutely examine the self in order to know if it has fulfilled the conditions imposed upon it in the morning and if any of its actions and inactions during the day was against the soul's progress towards its goal. Should any obligatory act be found to have been totally neglected, or performed imperfectly, it must, respectively, be fulfilled or compensated for with some supererogatory act. If a speech, look, or thought or an action like sitting, eating and sleeping or even a silence or inaction is found to have been undesirable it should be redeemed by doing appropriate deeds.<sup>2</sup>

**Punishment:** If the carnal soul is found to have committed any sin it should be punished so that it may not repeat it, and the punishment most useful to this end is to deprive for a time the sinful member of the gratification of its desire. The appropriate punishment for eating 'doubtful' food, for example, is suffering hunger for a day or two.<sup>3</sup> This is the application of the principle of opposite action to the virtue of self-examination.

1. I.D., IV, 340-44; K.S., pp. 766-71.

2. I.D., IV, 346; K.S., pp. 771-72. Al-Ghazālī's discussion on self-examination is influenced more by al-Muḥāsibī than by al-Makki; see Joseph Van Ess, Die Gedankenwelt des Ḥarīt al-Muḥāsibī (Bonn: Das Orientalische Seminar der Universität Bonn, 1961), pp. 139-43.

3. I.D., IV, 346-48; K.S., pp. 772-73.

Struggle: Besides being punished for committing sin, the carnal soul, if found slack in any virtuous act, should be compelled to persevere in many virtuous deeds so as to make up for what it has neglected. It will no doubt be unwilling to do so, but its unwillingness can be removed by associating with a devout person. In the absence of such a person what is needed is to know about the great perseverance of a devout person in good deeds; knowledge of this will incite the carnal soul to be engaged in very many acts of virtue.<sup>1</sup> Reproach: One trying to incite the carnal soul to do good and to avoid evil should reprimand it. By means of reproach it can be checked from exceeding the proper bounds and from inclining to evil, and if it is reproached every day no evil can be done by it. The method of reproach is pointing out to the carnal soul its <sup>stupidity</sup> and ignorance. After elaborately discussing this method of reproach,<sup>2</sup> al-Ghazālī begins to deal with meditation, the last means-virtue.

### Meditation

A man can gain the knowledge of the path to God by learning from others (taqlid); he can also obtain this knowledge by himself through insight of the way, and the mental process enabling him to do so is meditation (tafakkur). In regard to the nature of meditation, al-Ghazālī points out that in it two pieces of knowledge are

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1. I.D., IV, 348-55; K.S., pp.774-76. For association as a means of acquiring virtue and for its substitution, see supra., p. 106

2. I.D., IV, 355-61; K.S., pp.776-78. In its form, style and sometimes even content al-Ghazālī's discussion of reproaching the carnal soul resembles the Kitāb Mu'ādhlat an Nafs which belongs to the Hermetic literature. (Cf. Budawī, "Masādiruh", pp.225-29). Through the sūfi Dhū'n-Nūn al-Misri who was familiar with Hermetic wisdom (see Arberry Sufism, p.50) al-Ghazālī may have had access to such Hermetic writings.



mentally joined together in a particular way so as to achieve a new knowledge. For example, a most basic truth about the 'path' is that the hereafter is preferable to this world; this can be obtained by mentally combining the proposition, 'what is more lasting should be preferred' with the proposition, 'the hereafter is more lasting'. This process may be continued indefinitely. By joining the conclusion arrived at with some other piece of information a new conclusion can be attained. In this way knowledge about ethical matters may go on increasing. This process is appropriate to those capable of deducing conclusions from premises and acquainted with the manner of meditation. Meditation is better than remembrance (dhikr) because while the benefit of the latter is the fixation in the soul of the things remembered, the advantage of the former is the achievement of knowledge in addition to the fixation in the soul of the objects of its meditation.<sup>1</sup>

When new knowledge is attained, the disposition of the soul is changed and with the change in disposition, the actions of the bodily members also change. Thus in the virtue of meditation, also, are present all the three elements required of a mystical virtue. These al-Ghazālī explains by means of the above-mentioned example: when, as a result of meditation, a man knows the excellence of the hereafter, desire for it and abandonment of this world follow; in consequence of the creation of this desire or will, the actions of his bodily members change - they abandon this-worldly actions and proceed to those related to the next. Meditation thus constitutes the source of and the key to all forms of good (khayrāt). It is better than remembrance for it is

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1. I.D., IV, 363; K.S., 780-81.

remembrance and something more; remembrance is, in turn, better than devotional acts performed by the members (in fact, these acts are noble because remembrance is present in them); therefore, meditation is more excellent than devotional acts. It is for this reason that the Prophet said, "An hour's meditation is better than a thousand years' worship".<sup>1</sup>

Meditation as a mystical virtue should be made on four matters related to the 'path'. These are, (a) actions, (b), the qualities of the soul, (c) God's essence, His attributes and His beautiful names, and (d) His works. Actions include both good and bad ones; they comprise the actions of the seven members and of the whole body; an example of the latter kind of action is disobedience to parents. Qualities of the soul also include those which are blameworthy and those that are praiseworthy. These qualities are many in number, but al-Ghazālī thinks that it is enough to meditate on ten good qualities and on an equal number of evil ones, for these are the roots from which others stem. Meditation on a quality should be concentrated on three aspects of it, namely, (a) its nature as good or bad, (b) the way of acquiring it if it is good or of getting rid of it if it is bad, and (c) whether it exists in the meditator now, or existed in him in the past or will exist in him in the future. Meditation on God's essence, His attributes and the meaning of His beautiful names is reserved for the most devout and for the intelligent. Common men are puzzled when they come to meditate upon these and this is why <sup>the</sup> Shari'ah forbade them to do so. What is suitable to men of lesser intellect is to meditate on God's wonderful works. By doing this they will arrive at the conclusion

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1. I.D., IV, 364; K.S., p. 781.

that these have an Agent who possesses the attributes of majesty and greatness, holiness and highness, perfect wisdom, will, power and so on. All the existences (mawjūdāt) other than God are His works; many of them are unknown and so meditation on them is impossible; of the known existences many are imperceptible by the senses e.g. angels, jinn, the throne etc. and therefore meditation on them is obscure; things perceptible by the eye such as the sky, the earth and all that is in them are easy to apprehend and so one should meditate on these works of God.<sup>1</sup> With 'meditation' the treatment of the means-group of mystical virtues comes to an end. Al-Ghazālī then goes on to deal with the end-group.

#### The Mystical Virtues regarded as Ends.

##### Trust

The first of the mystical virtues of the end-group is gratitude (shukr) to God. Al-Ghazālī gave an account of this in his discussion on 'patience' for an especial reason already mentioned and this study has followed his order. Trust (tawakkul) in God is the second of the mystical virtues regarded as end; it is a high station of the path to God. Like other 'stations', this, too, is described as composed of knowledge, disposition and action; disposition, however, is what is precisely meant by trust, while knowledge is only its basis (asli binā') and action its result. In the Ihyā' this knowledge is stated as belief in three things, namely, (a) God's unity (al-ḥid), (b) His power and (c) His generosity and wisdom. But in the Kimiyā' it is stated as belief in two things - (a) God's unity and (b) His perfect kindness and mercy; however, belief in divine power is here stated within the discussion

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1. I.D., IV, 365-71, 381; K.S., pp.781-85, 797.

of unity. Of these, belief in divine unity is the most important and this is why in the Ihyā' it alone has sometimes been called the basis of the virtue of trust. In order to serve as the basis of trust these beliefs must be very dominant in the soul.<sup>1</sup> Divine unity, then, constitutes a great part of the element of knowledge, the cause of trust. Its nature al-Ghazālī discusses in a section separate from the one on the disposition of trust because it is very subtle and difficult to understand and therefore needs explanation; to suppose, as one may do, from this separate treatment, that divine unity is classified by al-Ghazālī as a separate mystical quality is wrong. Since it is not a mystical quality it is not stated in the Arbaʿīn<sup>2</sup> and it is dropped in his assertion in the Ihyā', "trust is a station that comes after asceticism".<sup>3</sup> In not regarding divine unity as a mystical quality al-Ghazālī follows al-Makkī rather <sup>than</sup> al-Qushayrī who regarded it as a 'station'.<sup>4</sup>

In order to show how trust is mainly based upon divine unity, al-Ghazālī enumerates its grades as four. The first is merely saying that God is one without belief in His oneness. The second is belief (ītiqād) in His oneness; this is the divine unity of the common believers and of the theologians (mutakallimūn); the former form this faith by hearing from others while the latter by means of some sort of proof. The third is the divine unity of the gnostics, those brought near to God; through a light (nūr) created by God in their soul i.e. through intuition (kashf) they see that all the things come from the One; although they see many things in existence they see that the real Agent of them all is the One. The

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1. I.D., IV, 211, 223; K.S., pp.798, 799, 807, 810. 2. p.218.

3. p. 241.

4. Qūt, II, 3-75; Risāla, II, 581-881.

fourth is the divine unity of the most devout; they see nothing in existence except the One; this is called by the mystics annihilation in unity (fana' fi at-tawhid). Al-Ghazālī gives a short but complete description of this grade although this, in his view, has nothing to do with the disposition of trust. Nor can the disposition be produced by the first grade of divine unity because it is hypocrisy nor by the second for it is mere faith, or faith confirmed by proof. Common men and the theologians are thus deprived of the mystical virtue of trust. It is only the third grade which is a major part of the basis of trust, for at this grade is 'uncovered' <sup>the fact</sup> that there is no agent except God and that every form of existence is created only by Him. He has no partner in the work of creation; all the causes (asbāb) of things are only appointed by Him to work on His behalf. When a man knows all these through 'intuition', his knowledge of these becomes clearer than that of a thing acquired by seeing it with the eyes. Such knowledge of God's unity and power creates the disposition of trust but this creation is incomplete without belief in His mercy and wisdom. This belief strengthens reliance upon Him and upon his care of everyone - dispositions which are required for trust. The gist of this belief is that God's mercy is all-pervasive and His wisdom is supremely perfect. His kindness to all beings - from the bees and ants to human beings - is greater than that of a mother to her child. The world is the best possible world so that nothing can be added to or taken away from it in order to make it more perfect. He regulates the world in the best manner and makes everything such as it should be. Imperfections in it He created not only to make the value of perfections known but also because every form of these



is in reality a perfection and good for a certain individual though not to others. Divine mercy and wisdom thus necessitate both perfection and imperfection in the world.<sup>1</sup>

Then, the belief that God is the only agent of action, that He has perfect wisdom and power over men's deeds and that he is merciful towards every individual, necessarily produces in the soul the disposition of trust, i.e. reliance in all the acts upon God alone. This reliance should be so perfect that in the mind there will be present, not vacillation or absorption in anxiety about actions, but quietness and tranquility; if the external means of earning a livelihood are not obtained, the mind is not disturbed by the thought of sustenance, but has faith that God will ultimately supply the bare necessities. In the disposition of trust, the mind should be calm and peaceful. In respect of strength there are three grades of the disposition of trust. At the lowest grade is a man whose reliance upon God is like one's reliance upon one's lawyer. Higher than this is the grade at which man's relation with God resembles that of a child with his mother. His dependence upon God in all matters is natural (tab'i) so that he is not aware of it; but those at the first grade trust in Him through effort and difficulty and are aware of their trust. At the highest grade man's relation with God is like a corpse's relation with its washer. He sees divine power operating in all his movements and passively responds to the washer's hands as they move the corpse; he believes that he is only a channel of motion, power, will, knowledge and all other of his qualities and that each is produced in him by God and so he waits for what is to be produced in him. While one at the second

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1. I.D., IV, 212-13, 222-23; K.S., pp. 799-801, 802, 807.

grade abandons invocation to anyone other than God, one at the third grade shuns invocations to Him also, thinking that He gives him more if he does not pray to Him. The second and the third grades are very rarely achieved; it is the first grade of trust that is generally found.<sup>1</sup>

In regard to 'action' al-Ghazālī maintains that so long as the third grade of trust exists in the soul (and it exists only a few minutes) man remains like a dead body and makes no effort towards action. The second grade of trust does not last more than a day or two during which time no effort for action or resorting to the means (asbāb) to it is made except earnest prayer to God. In the first grade, of course, there are effort towards and choice of action; but this effort is limited in the sense that it is directed only towards those acts which God explicitly ordered men to perform and towards those which, though not ordered, are approved by Him. Effort towards such actions is not incompatible with the mystical virtue of trust, for it is made in carrying out His order, explicit or implicit; rather absence of this effort is opposed to trust since one who relies upon another is required to act according to his advice. The view that trust requires absolute negation of activity is, according to al-Ghazālī, wrong. At its first grade trust requires man to earn a livelihood and to perform the activities of life by employing the body and the soul. All his voluntary actions are directed towards acquiring any useful thing he lacks, safeguarding anything he already has, preventing any harmful thing that threatens to overtake him and removing any harmful thing which has already attacked him. These are,

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1. I.D., IV, 223-25; K.S., pp.808, 809-10.

respectively, earning a livelihood, hoarding wealth, seeking safety from a thief, ferocious animals etc. and taking medicine in order to cure bodily diseases. In each of these four kinds of activity certain stipulations need to be fulfilled by a mystic. Their essence is that he will rely, not upon his acts, but upon God's mercy; he should believe that just as man's guidance, motions and means to actions are all from God, so too their completion; he believes that no external means has any power of its own; whatever he sees, he sees to be from God. When such is his condition, he is a truster in a mystical sense.<sup>1</sup> From trust al-Ghazālī passes on to discuss the virtue of love of God without stating any reason for this - obviously because it is the only virtue awaiting discussion.

### Love

Love (mahabba) of God is the highest of all the mystical virtues; it is the last station of the path to God. True, however, that after acquiring it some praiseworthy qualities like yearning etc. are produced in the soul, but they are produced as its by-products or consequences and not as independent qualities. All the mystical virtues stated so far lead the novice to it and prepare him for it; all the vices are got rid of with a view to cleansing the soul for its sake. Every believer has the basic love of God; a mystic is not content with this much of love; he aims at developing it to such an extent that it takes possession of his entire soul; such an intense love is perfect love (ḥubb kāmāl) and this is what constitutes the highest perfection of human being. One who is unable to attain to this highest

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1. I.D., IV, 225-26, 228; K.S., pp.809-11; A.W., p.69.

degree of love, should at least love God more than any other thing. The more intense is one's love of God in this world, the higher will be one's degree of happiness in the next.<sup>1</sup>

While giving an exposition of the virtue of love, al-Ghazālī does not say explicitly that it, too, is composed of the three elements of knowledge, disposition and action; but from his description of what the love of God really means, how it is produced and what are its signs, it is plain that he regards this virtue, too, as consisting of these three parts. Before dealing with these, he proves the possibility of love of God by citing the Qur'ānic verses, prophetic traditions and the agreement of the Muslim community (ijmā') on the obligatoriness of love of God. Besides proving the existence of this mystical virtue by means of the Shari'ā, he makes rational inquiry into the reason for love in general, and thereby proves that it is not only that love of God is possible but that nothing save Him can be the true object of love. All these he does as an answer to those who deny love of God on the ground that love is only possible between the members of the same genus and interprets the love of God spoken of in the Shari'ā as perseverance in obedience to Him. By denying this they have also denied yearning, intimacy etc. which are the products of love. These people are not the Muslim philosophers for they acknowledged love of God by the gnostic ('ārif) who possesses true knowledge of Him.<sup>2</sup> They are referred to by al-Ghazālī and al-Makkī as some theologians (mutakallimūn) and also as some scholars ('ulamā'). One of them is mentioned to be

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1. I.D., IV, 252-54, 278-80, 283; K.S., pp.829-30.

2. Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, p. 147.

Ahmad ibn-Ghālīb known as al-Ghulām al-Khalīl. Al-Ghazālī believes that they denied love of God because they failed to understand its real meaning.<sup>1</sup>

To make clear the meaning of love of God, al-Ghazālī states the meaning of love in general. If, he says, a thing is agreeable to a man's nature (taba) it gives him pleasure, but if it is disagreeable it gives him pain. Everything that gives man pleasure is beloved by him, and its being loved means that his nature is inclined to it. Similarly, a thing that gives him pain is hated by him and its being hated means that his nature is averse from it. What gives neither pleasure nor pain is neither loved nor hated. Love, then, refers to the inclination of nature (mayl at-tabā) to something that is pleasure-giving.<sup>2</sup> If this inclination is too strong it is called passionate love (ʿishq). Hate is the aversion of nature from something painful and if the aversion is very strong it is called rancour (hiqd). Inclination to or aversion from a thing comes after the thing is known. Sensuous objects are known by the five senses, but abstract substances are apprehended by means of man's sixth sense variously known as the intellect, the light or the soul. This sense is stronger in apprehension than the five senses and the beauty of the abstract meaning apprehended by it is greater than the physical beauty seen by them. Application of all these to God gives the result that it is the soul that apprehends Him; the pleasure it enjoys by perceiving His beauty is very intense; inclination of man's nature to Him i.e. his love of Him, becomes very strong.

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1. I.E., IV, 252-54, 278-80, 282; K.S., pp.829-30.

2. This is also the definition of love by al-Muhāsibī; see Qushayrī, Risāla, p.190.



Love of God may, then, be defined as the inclination of man's nature produced when his soul gets pleasure by apprehending His beautiful attributes.<sup>1</sup> This inclination is the disposition of the virtue of love.

In order to show that love of God is not only possible but that it constitutes the only true form of love, al-Ghazālī states the reasons for love in general. The first reason, he says, is man's love of himself, i.e. love of his own existence and the perfection of his own attributes; it is only because he loves himself that he loves property, children, friends and relatives; he loves them because they are means of his perfection and the continuation of his existence; al-Ghazālī explains how love of others is based upon self-love. The second reason for love is beneficence (iḥsān). By nature man loves anyone who does good to him. Since loving a man for benefit is loving not him but his beneficial act, love of him ceases with the cessation of his act and increases or decreases according to the increase or decrease in the act. The third reason, love for benefactor without receiving any benefit from him, is implanted in man. A man who hears about the beneficence of a king in a distant part of the world loves him even though, because of the distance of his country, he cannot have any share in his good works. This shows that man loves another because he does good absolutely without any reference to himself. The fourth reason is the love of what is beautiful for the sake of its beauty and not for anything obtainable by it. Beauty of a thing consists in the perfection befitting it, and so beauty is not the same for all beings. The internal beauty, the beauty of the

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1. I.D., IV, 254; K.S., p.831.

inward form or good qualities, is perceptible by the intellect. Perception of the internal beauty, like that of the external, gives pleasure to the perceiver and consequently his nature is inclined to it i.e. he loves it. The last reason is the relationship and affinity that may exist between two persons. Sometimes this affinity is based upon something visible as the affinity between the young, and sometimes it is hidden as the unity of two persons without there being any consideration of benefit or beauty or any other thing. This affinity is spiritual.<sup>1</sup>

When all these reasons are united in one person, the love for him must be doubled, and if these are of an extreme degree, he will be loved exceedingly. Since the five reasons in their totality and their extreme degree can only refer to God, it is only He to whom love in its real sense is due. Al-Ghazālī shows how all the five reasons are united in God in their extreme degree. He says that the first reason, love of the self, necessitates love of God because the existence, perfection and continuation of the self are all from Him alone. It is He who creates him, preserves him after creation and perfects him by creating the organs and the qualities of perfection, the means to them and the guidance to the means. One who knows this loves Him necessarily. As to man's love for one who does good to him, it demands that he love God only since

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1. I.D., IV, 255-58; K.S., pp.832-34. Comparison of al-Ghazālī's account in its entirety of the causes of love in general with the accounts of Aristotle (*Ethics*, pp.22-31) and Miskawayh (*Tahdhīb*, pp.113-29) clearly shows how greatly influenced he is here by them. Cf. S. Van den Bergh, "The 'Love of God' in Ghazali's *Vivification of Theology*", J.S.S., I (1956), 305-21. Comparison of al-Ghazālī's entire account of love of God with those of al-Makkī (*Qūt* II, 99-141) and al-Qushayrī (*Risāla*, II, 610ff) shows how skilfully he makes use of philosophers' ideas in explaining a mystical virtue and how greatly his making use of them contributes to its systematization and clarification.

he who in reality does good to him is only God; one who appears to be the source of benefit is only the intermediary through whom the benefit comes from God. By analysing a man's act of benefiting another with his wealth, al-Ghazālī shows how God is the real Benefactor and man can be called benefactor only metaphorically. Love for a benefactor only because he is a benefactor and not because of any favour from him also required love for God and not loving anything except in relation to Him, for it is He Who is the benefactor of all creatures. One who knows that God is the benefactor of all cannot love anyone save Him. Love for what has inward beauty for beauty's sake also necessitates love of God alone because inward beauty, i.e. beauty of the good attributes of the human soul, is present in Him in perfect degree, whereas in man it is present only imperfectly. Since man's good qualities are, in the final analysis, from God, it is folly on one's part to love him for their beauty without loving God. Lastly, love based upon hidden affinity too requires love of God for there exists hidden affinity between Him and man. Some of the affinity is lawful to describe in a book, while some of it is unlawful and can only be experienced by those who traversed the 'path'. What can be expressed is the affinity in those qualities which are divine and which can be acquired by man, although imperfectly. Thus all the reasons for love in their supreme degree can only refer to God and hence it is only Him to whom love in its real sense is due.<sup>1</sup>

Love of God is produced in the soul by knowledge of Him. This knowledge belongs to knowledge of revelation ('ilm al-mukāshafa) which is outside the scope of ethics. As for the actions of

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1. I.D., IV, 258-64; K.S., pp.834-38.

"the soul, the tongue and the members" that proceeds from love when it is dominant in the soul, al-Ghazālī states it in a section entitled "The Signs of Love". He says that one who loves God prefers, inwardly and outwardly, what God likes to what he himself desires for a true lover's will is his beloved's; he refrains from following his passions and committing sin and persists in difficult good deeds and is not at all idle in serving Him; committing sin is incompatible with perfect love but not with basic love. His mind is not free from remembering God at any time and his tongue does not become tired of mentioning His name since he is a true lover and a true lover cannot forget his beloved; for an hour passed without these, he regrets greatly and begins to remember Him again but he does not regret if any of his worldly things are lost because he believes that his Beloved decrees for him what is good for him; performing devotional acts, remembering Him and mentioning His name are all felt by him easy and pleasurable. Solitude and secret converse with God are the things most liked by him; so engrossed becomes he in his converse with his Beloved that all things other than Him pass into oblivion; night is most desired by him for at night there is no obstacle to his praying to Him; reciting His book and enjoying the pleasures of converse with Him. Because he loves God he loves all that is related to Him, such as the Qur'ān, the Prophet and all pious men; he is hostile to God's enemies who do what He dislikes and is not impeded by anything from being angry with anyone for His sake. He keeps his love in secret, carefully avoids the claim of it and guards against expressing ecstasy in love; all that he tries to do is to make his Beloved aware that he loves Him. While loving God he fears Him, too, for His majesty

and greatness; fear is not incompatible with love since the former arises from the apprehension of His greatness while the latter comes from the knowledge of His beauty; he is afraid of avoidance, veil, removal (ib'ād), stop in advance; loss of what cannot be regained after being lost, diversion from God (salw) and substitution of love of Him by love of other than Him; when his fear of God's doing these is along with his love of Him, the degree of his fear will be less than that of his love. Lastly, he likes to meet his Beloved and since he cannot meet Him without leaving this world through death, he likes death; if he dislikes the coming of death and not the death itself because of his being yet unprepared to meet Him, it is not a sign that he does not love God. He is intimate with God and is satisfied with His decree.<sup>1</sup>

Absence of these actions of the soul, the tongue and the members will prove that love of God is not dominant and in order to strengthen it al-Ghazālī mentions two ways, one of which is severing the soul's attachment to the world and bringing out from it its love of other-than-God-thing. This is effected by the acquisition of all the mystical virtues below love. When love of things other than God is not in the soul, love of Him finds place in it. The other way is increasing knowledge of Him and this may be accomplished in two ways. One is what the sūfīs, the strong (aqwiyā'), adopt, namely undergoing mortification and purifying the soul by remembering God all the time with so much concentration on Him that they forget themselves and the world. In such a state God's greatness becomes as clear to them as if they were seeing it with their physical eyes. This process is one of knowing God first and then

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1. I.D., IV, 282-90; K.S., pp.853-55.



knowing His works through Him. The other process which is easy and, therefore, suitable to the weak (du'afā') is reflecting first on God's wonderful works and then on their Agent as the possessor of perfect power, wisdom, majesty and goodness and finally on these attributes of His so that their real nature may be revealed to them. This is first knowing God's works and then knowing Him through them. This process is widely adopted by those treading the 'path'. Without following these two methods knowledge of God cannot be acquired and without knowledge love is impossible to acquire. Those who know God not in these ways but only hearing about Him from others have only general knowledge of Him and this is why their love of Him is weak.<sup>1</sup>

#### Yearning, Intimacy and Satisfaction

After love al-Ghazālī deals with the virtues that he regards as the products or fruits of it.<sup>2</sup> These are yearning (shawq), intimacy (uns) and satisfaction (ridā'). Intimacy is discussed in the Kīmīyā' not in a separate section as in the Ihyā' but within the discussion on yearning, and this implies that it is looked upon by al-Ghazālī as less important than yearning; in al-Makkī's system, however, yearning received only passing remarks.<sup>3</sup> Satisfaction is regarded by al-Ghazālī as the most important of all the virtues that are the consequences of love and this is why it is elaborately treated in all his works dealing with the mystical virtues; In the Arba'in it is called the ninth mystical quality.<sup>4</sup> By regarding satisfaction as a product of love al-Ghazālī agrees with some of his sūfī predecessors and differs from others. The

1. I.D., IV, 271-73; K.S., pp.850-51.

2. I.D., IV, 252, 290.

3. Qūt, II, 120.

4. p.227.

former are aẓ-Sarrāj, al-Kalābādhī and al-Makkī for they all placed satisfaction before love. Among the latter one is al-Kharrāj for he placed it after love but before yearning and intimacy. Al-Makkī seems to have distinguished between two kinds of satisfaction; one is what is facilitated by 'trust' and so he placed it immediately after trust, calling it the eighth 'station',<sup>1</sup> and the other is what is produced by love and this he placed after 'love' without, however, calling it a 'station' or treating it elaborately. Those who placed it just after 'trust' believed that trust is sufficient to produce it, but al-Ghazālī thinks that unless man loves God strongly it is almost impossible on his part to be well-pleased with all that comes from Him. Because yearning, intimacy and satisfaction are the qualities that come to the soul automatically when love of God is dominant in it, and not independent qualities, al-Ghazālī does not speak of them as composed of knowledge, disposition and action. It is only in the case of intimacy that he describes its signs, which may be regarded as its action. In the case of satisfaction it was stated that supplication and fleeing from the places of sin or not to enter into the places where epidemic has broken out are not against satisfaction; discussion of these is not one of the action proceeding from the disposition of satisfaction as someone may think; it is rather an answer to those who deny satisfaction - an answer which clarifies the meaning of satisfaction as well.

Yearning: It is a necessary consequence of love of God; one who loves Him yearns for Him of necessity. Al-Ghazālī states the nature of yearning as a mystical quality by stating the nature of

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1. Qūt, II, 151.

yearning for a worldly object. Yearning for an object is impossible if the object is completely perceived or completely unperceived; it can be yearned for only when it is apprehended in some way and unapprehended in another. A man's yearning for it means that his mind wants it to be present before his eyes so that by seeing it his apprehension (idrāk) of it may become perfect; perfect apprehension is only achieved after seeing with the eyes. Similar is the nature of yearning for God. Although a lover's perception of the divine beauty is extremely clear (ghāyat al-wudūh) it is not perfectly clear; his mind wants his Beloved to be present before his eyes so that he may see His beauty with perfect clarity for perfect apprehension is achieved after seeing with the physical eyes. This restless desire for perfect clearness of what has become clear only imperfectly is yearning for God. This yearning will only be satisfied in the next world when the lover will have the vision of God. There is another kind of yearning which will not be satisfied even in the hereafter. Al-Ghazālī states it saying that a lover perceives only some of the divine affairs (umūr ilāhiyya) and he believes that many of them are still totally unknown to him. So his mind is restless to know, although vaguely, what he could not as yet perceive at all. This state of disturbance and restlessness in the soul is yearning for God. The reason why it will not be satisfied even in the next world is that this can be satisfied only when the lover knows all about God, His attributes, His wisdom and His works, but knowing these all is impossible on a man's part since these are unlimited; however much divine majesty and beauty one will know in the next world, some of them will still remain unknown to him and so his yearning

for knowing them will eternally remain in him; whenever his longing will be satisfied to some extent, he will experience new pleasure.<sup>1</sup>

Intimacy: Sometimes what predominates in a lover of God is joy on account of his feeling of being near to his Beloved and of contemplation on His presence; when his perception is confined to His beauty and is not directed to that aspect of it which has not yet been perceived by him, his mind rejoices in perceiving it. This rejoicing of his soul resulting from the study of divine beauty is what al-Ghazālī means by intimacy with God. This pleasure, this joy, becomes very intense because, being severed from that unperceived part of divine beauty and from the danger of being removed from the Beloved, the mind becomes enthralled in perceiving the perceived part of the divine beauty. The sign indicating the dominance of the state of intimacy in a man is that he loves solitude, for without being separate from other-than-God-thing one cannot be intimate with Him; he finds great pleasure in remembering Him in loneliness; when he mixes with people he is with them physically but with God mentally.<sup>2</sup> Besides this, a kind of frankness (inbīsāt) is found in his speech, work and secret prayer to His Beloved. This frankness is unsound in appearance for it shows audacity to and absence of awe of Him, but He tolerates it from those whose state of intimacy with Him is established; if it proceeds from others they thereby become almost infidel.<sup>3</sup>

Satisfaction: The most important of all the qualities which are necessary consequences of the mystical virtue of love of God is satisfaction with God's decree (qadā'). Anyone who has strong

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1. I.D., IV, 277-91; K.S., pp.855-56.

2. I.D., IV, 291; K.S., p.856.

3. I.D., IV, 292-94.

love for Him necessarily remains satisfied with all that his Beloved does. Satisfaction with those works of God which are agreeable to him is something easy and understandable, but to be satisfied with those of His works which are against his passions and natural desires especially with affliction (balā') that occasionally befalls man, is also easy for those who have passionate love ('ishq) of Him. There are two ways in which this is shown to be easy. One of them is that a lover's mind is so much engrossed in the love of his Beloved that he does not feel the pain of affliction befalling him. Such a phenomenon is not absent in worldly matters too: there are many warriors who, while engaged in fighting, fail to feel the pain of their wounds; they only become aware of these when they see the blood gushing. When a man is deeply engaged in some action, the pain of thornpricks is not felt by him. The other way is that the lover does feel the pain of affliction but is not only satisfied with but also desirous of it because he knows with certainty that the reward to be given for this satisfaction is far more than the pain of suffering it. His carnal soul dislikes the affliction but the intellect, knowing it to be God-sent and curative, desires it. He is like a trader who joyfully takes the trouble of going to distant cities in the hope of profit, or like a patient who feels the pain caused by the surgeon's lance and is pleased with his operation.<sup>1</sup>

It is not a stipulation of satisfaction that man will remain pleased with what he has and not work or pray to God for what he lacks. Supplication to Him for forgiveness, for immunity from sin and for assistance in various good deeds is not incompatible

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1. I.D., IV, 297-300; K.S., pp.859-60.



with satisfaction. God created means (asbāb) of action and asked man to resort to them, and supplication is but a means in the sense that by it are produced in the soul such commendable qualities as tenderness, a broken heart and humility, and these qualities beautify the soul and serve as means of God's kindness to the supplicant. Supplication is very much like drinking water for quenching thirst; because drinking water is a means of quenching thirst, to do this is not against satisfaction with God's decree of thirst. Adoption of means is not against trust and satisfaction. To complain against intolerable heat or cold weather, to blame a particular kind of food and to assert that poverty is affliction and family is anxiety are all imperfection in satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

Nor is satisfaction opposed to dislike for sin, hatred for means to it, prohibiting people from its commission and ordering them to do good; sins, infidelity and various other forms of evil are decreed by God, but one who is satisfied with Him must not approve of these. Knowing that these are decreed by Him some people wrongly maintain that satisfaction with them is needed; al-Ghazālī calls these persons men deprived of deep knowledge. He shows in two ways how hating these forms of evil despite their being decreed by God is not incompatible with satisfaction with Him. He also elaborately explains that it is not imperfect satisfaction to flee from the cities where vice is rampant, to condemn such places and the means to vices in order that hatred for them may be created in others' minds.<sup>2</sup>

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1. I.D., IV, 300-03E; K.S., pp.860-61.

2. I.D., IV, 301-304; K.S., p.861.

CHAPTER VI  
DEVOTIONAL ACTS

Functions of Devotional Acts in Moral Life.

As already explained, knowledge and action ('amal) are regarded by al-Ghazālī as the two primary means of realizing the moral ideal, and action is divided into that which is concerned with man's inward self (bātin) and that which concerns the outward (zāhir). With an exposition of the former in the last two chapters, an attempt may now be made to deal with the latter. This order of discussion, followed here only for the sake of convenience, is of course the reverse of the one followed by al-Ghazālī himself. In the Ihyā' and the Kīmīyā' where he gives his ethical system in its entirety, the description of the action related to the outward self precedes that of the action related to the inward self. This is certainly not accidental; on the contrary, it is deliberately made in order to keep the exposition of the system in harmony with the order to be followed in the practice of it. According to al-Ghazālī the spiritual training of a seeker after God should begin in the outward action; it is only after successfully completing this part of self-discipline that he can proceed to train himself in the inward action; failure to complete this part means inability to proceed further. This idea, which accords with that of other ṣūfī doctors,<sup>1</sup> found expression in some passages of the Bidāya one of which may be quoted as follows:

"You must realize that the guidance ... has a beginning and an ending, an outward aspect and an inward. No one can reach the end until he has completed the beginning; no one

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1. See Hujwiri, Kashf, p.54.

can discover the inward aspect until he has mastered the outward. Here, then, I give you counsel about the beginning of guidance so that thereby you may test yourself and examine your heart. If you find your heart drawn towards it and your soul docile and receptive, go ahead, make for the end."<sup>1</sup>

Outward action is divided by al-Ghazālī into that which is directed towards God and that which is directed towards one's fellow human beings. The first category of action is the same as the devotional acts ('ibādāt) described by the Shari'ā; it is the fulfilment of all God's rights or dues (huqūq Allāh). Although directed towards God, these acts are for the benefit of man's soul and not for any benefit to God because He is exalted over gain and loss. Acts of devotion are seven in number - ritual prayer, fasting, poor rate, pilgrimage to Mecca, Qur'ān-reading, praise of God and invocation of Him. The first four are obligatory and the remainder supererogatory. Each of the obligatory acts becomes an act of supererogation when it is performed more frequently than the Shari'ā obliges. For example, fasting in the month of Ramaḍān is obligatory, but to fast on other great days of the year is supererogatory. Each obligatory act consists of many parts, some of which are such that without them the act is invalid; some are needed only for its perfection (kamāl), some are the means of its original excellence (ḥusn) and others are for perfecting this excellence.<sup>2</sup> All these parts of different grades are broadly divided into two groups, namely, those which are basic, necessary for the validity and perfection of the act and are called obligatory parts, and those which are complements perfecting the efficacy of the basic parts and are called the supererogatory parts.<sup>3</sup> Performance of the obligatory

1. p. 87.

2. I.D., I, 142, 173, 212.

3. M.D., pp.69-70; I.D., I, 173.

acts is needed for the attainment of salvation, and those who confine themselves only to these form the lower class of virtuous men. People who fail to perform them are immoral and will meet 'misery'. The supererogatory acts are for the attainment of the proximity to God which ensures the highest happiness and those who are able to perform these constitute the higher class of the virtuous. The two sets of devotional acts, then, are relevant to the two groups of virtuous people. This is expressed in many of al-Ghazālī's works,<sup>1</sup> but it has found vivid expression in the following passage of the Bidāya:

"In respect of his religion a man stands in one of three classes: (a) he may be 'safe' (or 'saved'), namely, when he confines himself to performing the duties of strict obligation and avoiding sins; or (b) he may be 'above standard' (literally 'making a profit'), namely, when of his will he makes an offering and performs supererogatory acts; or (c) he may be 'below standard' (literally 'incurring a loss'), namely, when he falls short of what is incumbent upon him. If you can not be 'above standard', at least endeavour to be 'safe', and beware, oh beware, of being 'below standard'."<sup>2</sup>

Every devotional act is regarded by al-Ghazālī as having two aspects - internal and external - and its perfect performance as depending upon fulfilling both of them. The latter is, as it were, the body or shape (sūra) of the act, while the former is its life (haya) or spirit (rūh). Should the internal aspect not be performed, the act is merely motions of the body and is incapable of producing the desired effect on the soul. The harm of neglecting one particular part of the external aspect differs from that of another, and this difference is owing to the difference in the grades of the various parts. In the case of

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1. I.D., I, 141; K.S., p.136; B.H., p. 110.

2. B.H., p.110.

3. I.D., I, 212, 142.

some acts e.g. ritual prayer and pilgrimage, every part of the external aspect is shown to have an inward aspect independent of the inward aspect of the act as a whole; if a part is performed neglecting its corresponding inward aspect, the devotional act is comparable to a man who has eyes but no vision.<sup>1</sup> The external aspect of an act described in al-Ghazālī's ethical works is more than the entire act as described in the works on Islamic jurisprudence including those of his own.<sup>2</sup> The inward aspect is the action of the soul; it is to perform it with single-minded devotion (hudūr al-qalb), purity of thought, absolute sincerity etc. which are not usually mentioned by the jurists.<sup>3</sup> These are variously referred to as ma'ānī al-bāṭina, sifāt al-qalb, ahwāl al-qalb, a'māl al-qalb, waṣā'if al-qalb and so on. To be able to accomplish these it is necessary to know the deeper meaning of an act which is accordingly described in many cases. The mystical idea that an act is unsound (bāṭil) i.e. useless is proved by evidence from the Shari'ā. The judgement of the Muslim jurists (fuqahā') that an act is sound when its external aspect is observed is explained by al-Ghazālī as the one made for the worldly. Since they are unable to do more than this, to stipulate the observance of the inward aspect for the validity of the act is to stipulate the impossible for them.<sup>4</sup> By thus insisting on the observance of both the inward and the outward aspects of an act al-Ghazālī combined sūfism with the punctilious observance of the Shari'ā; he infused life and vitality and profound mystical emotion into the dry thoughts of the legalists. This is the

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1. K.S., pp.141, 137; I.D., I.                      2. I.D., I, 130.

3. Ibid. pp.142, 130.

4. I.D., I, 212, 144; K.S., p.685.



continuation of the task being done by his sūfī predecessors.

This emphasis upon the inward aspect is linked with al-Ghazālī's conception of the function of devotional acts in moral life. They are, in his view, prescribed for remembrance of God. How this is achieved by means of them is explained in a passage of the Kimīyā<sup>1</sup>: Quoting the Qur'ānic verse,

"...surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of God is the greatest..."

he proves the existence of remembrance in ritual prayer. Recitation of the Qur'ān reminds the reciter of God necessarily since it is God's speech; everything in it refreshes his awareness of Him. When appetites are annulled by fasting, the soul becomes pure (sāfi) and, consequently, fit for remembering God; the soul in which passions predominate cannot remember God and even if it could, it could not receive the effect of remembrance. In pilgrimage visiting God's house reminds the pilgrim of Him and incites in his soul a longing to meet Him. Praise of God is remembrance of Him in its entirety. Because in invocation remembrance is obvious al-Ghazālī, without mentioning it, concludes that the kernel of all the devotional acts and their aim are remembrance of God.<sup>1</sup> In the Ihyā<sup>2</sup>, too, he speaks of this aim.

While dealing with the mystical virtues he confirms this view, saying that devotional acts are excellent only because remembrance of God is present in them.<sup>3</sup> In the Arba'in this aim is described as remembrance of God and the turning of the soul from this world to the hereafter.<sup>4</sup> Since remembrance is present in every act of devotion, perseverance in it means perseverance in remembrance as

1. K.S., pp.210, 204, 179, 861.

2. I.D., I, 142.

3. Ibid, IV, 364.

4. P.114.

a result of which love of God and intimacy with him are produced in the soul.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the ultimate aim of devotional acts is love of God and nearness to Him.

Besides the remembrance of God, al-Ghazālī also speaks of another function of devotional acts, namely, purification of the soul from vices and its beautification with virtues. This he points out while discussing most of the acts; Ritual prayer as a whole, he says, is prescribed by the Shari'ah to enable man to polish (tasqīl) the mirror of his soul, to renew his remembrance of God and to strengthen his 'faith'; both prostration and genuflection aim at creating the quality of humility in the soul.<sup>2</sup> The function of alms-giving is to cleanse (tāḥīr) the soul from miserliness and to generate in it the quality of gratitude to God for granting him wealth.<sup>3</sup> The function of fasting is to purify the soul from the dominance of passions which impel him to evil; it is also to acquire a divine attribute and an angelic quality.<sup>4</sup> Knowledge of the inward aspect of pilgrimage helps man to cleanse his soul; besides, by doing those acts of pilgrimage whose reasons are unknown, man opposes passions and achieves perfect obedience to God.<sup>5</sup> Recitation of the Qur'ān removes the rust from the soul.<sup>6</sup> The qualities produced from praise of God and invocation to him are said to serve as brightening (jalā) of the soul.<sup>7</sup>

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1. I.D., I, 115-873; K.S., pp. 90, 207, 70, 54-55, 712, also 74, 87, 115-873; A.D., p. 114; B.H., p. 113.

2. I.D., I, 143; K.S., pp. 735-37.

3. I.D., I, 193, 194.

4. I.D., I, 214, 143; B.H., p. 130.

5. I.D., I, 239, 240; K.S., pp. 735-37.

6. I.D., I, 245, 257.

7. I.D., IV, 305, I, 298.

From all these statements of al-Ghazālī it is plain that acts of devotion have a two-fold function of purification and beautification. This is also contained in his definition of practical knowledge (ʿilm al-muʿāmalā). This function is spoken of in the Arbaʿīn too.<sup>1</sup> It is true, however, that in some passages of his works al-Ghazālī speaks of only one aspect of this two-fold function. Thus sometimes he calls the devotional acts medicines for the soul's diseases;<sup>2</sup> this refers to their purificatory effect. Sometimes he describes their performance as watering the tree of 'faith' after removing the thorns of evil qualities from the soul;<sup>3</sup> this refers to the beautifying aspect. Mention of one aspect is made in order to emphasize this for some especial reason. This two-fold goal, of course, is not the final goal; the ultimate aim of acts of devotion is love of God and nearness to Him. When the soul is cleansed from vices and fortified with virtues, it is drawn near to God; its love for Him becomes strong and love for the world weak. When polishing the mirror of the soul is completed by means of action, intuitive knowledge is granted to it; this is evident from his words: "... the aim of action is to purify and cleanse the soul that the truth may be revealed in it and that it may be beautified by the true knowledge which is intuitive knowledge".<sup>4</sup> Such a knowledge of God is, as already mentioned, a means of strengthening love of Him.<sup>5</sup> In some places acts of devotion are said to be the effect of love rather than its means;<sup>6</sup> this happens after a strong love has

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1. p. 122.

2. K.S., 74; A.W., pp.69, 33, 79.

3. K.S., pp.664, 697.

4. I.D., IV, 272

5. supra, pp. 82-83; A.D., p.114. 6. I.D., IV, 253, 286; K.S., pp.

been created in the soul by devotional acts and by other means and this is necessitated by the circular relation between soul and body.

Then, the aim of the acts of devotion is love of God and nearness to Him through remembrance of Him and through purification of the soul and its beautification.<sup>1</sup> To suppose that their function is to enable man to receive the four forms of divine grace (tawfiq) needed for attaining 'happiness' is absolutely wrong. Nowhere does al-Ghazālī say that carrying out God's commandments is a means of obtaining His assistance for acquiring virtues; on the contrary, he explicitly says that divine grace is a means of carrying them out.<sup>2</sup> This grace, he says, is given to man when he makes the effort to fulfil the commandments as evidenced in the Qur'ānic verse,

"And as for those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them to Our ways".

He criticises as wrong the philosophers' opinion on the question of the purpose of the devotional acts. They maintain, he says, that these acts aim at keeping order among the common men and restraining them from fighting and quarrelling with one another and from giving rein to their desires; therefore the wise who can guard themselves against them are not under obligation to follow the Shari'a.<sup>3</sup>

Performance of devotional acts is, al-Ghazālī says, necessary at every stage of life; even after one has reached the

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1. Cf. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Religious Commandments", pp.173-84 especially 176, 180.

2. I.D., I, 271, 254; K.S., p. 620

3. M.D., pp.72-73. Cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, p.40-41; Avicenna, Shifā': Metaphysics, II, 444, 445; Fārābī, Milla, p.47.

spiritual goal and is endowed with gnosis (ma'rifa), one's obligation to serve God is not abolished; it remains until death. The circular relation between the body and the soul necessitates that the nearer a man is to God the more eager he is to keep the commandments; the more he loves God the more enthusiastic he is in carrying out what He commands and the more alien he is from what He forbids.<sup>1</sup> This view of al-Ghazālī accords with that of many of his sūfī predecessors on this point.<sup>2</sup> Like Hujwiri, he bitterly criticises the Latitudinarians' (ahl-al-ibāha) contention that the Shari'ā is meant for 'the weak' (du'afā') and that no sin harms him who is 'strong' on the path i.e. who has made some progress on it. Like al-Qushayrī, he regards them as those who have strayed from the path of sūfism and stresses that it is wrong to seek the path of the hereafter in a mystical way without a strict observance of devotional acts; he enumerates their reasons under seven heads and refutes them.<sup>3</sup> He also condemns those who follow the doctrine of authoritative instruction (ta'līm) for their neglect of God's commandments.<sup>4</sup> He, however, does not say anything about the Hallājīs and the Fārisīs who have been attacked by Hujwiri.<sup>5</sup> The latter also attacked the Carmateans and the Shī'ites for their doctrine that when reality (haqīqa) is revealed Shari'ā is abolished.<sup>6</sup>

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1. K.S., p.197.

2. For their views see Hujwiri, Kashf, pp.107, 122, 139, 53, 134, 140, 191, 217-18, 257.

3. K.S., pp.56, 30-31, 378-80, 260, 460, 578, 361-62;  
M.D., pp.72, 77.

4. M.D., p.71.

5. Kashf, pp.134, 131, 90.

6. Ibid, p.343.



To have the desired effect on the soul devotional acts need to be performed with intention (niyya) which must be free from hypocrisy; instead of purifying the soul a hypocritical act makes it more polluted with love of the world and submission to passions.<sup>1</sup> They should also be performed readily and with pleasure, and in order that one may be able to do so one has to undergo self-training (riyāda) whose nature has already been discussed in a previous chapter.<sup>2</sup> Success in discipline in devotional acts, as in all others, depends on the element of the grace of God. From this brief discussion concerning the functions of the acts of devotion transition may be made to treat them individually, dividing them into two groups. Treatment of the group of obligatory acts will precede that of the group of supererogatory ones, and the order of the acts in each group will be the same as the order set forth by al-Ghazālī himself.

### Obligatory Devotional Acts.

#### Ritual Prayer

Ritual prayer (ṣalā) is the greatest of all the obligatory devotional acts. Its precondition is purity (ṭahāra) which is of three grades, namely, purity of the body and dress from defilement, purity of the soul from vices and its purity from things other than God.<sup>3</sup> Al-Ghazālī first states the external aspect of prayer which consists of various acts of three different grades.<sup>4</sup> Then he discusses the inward aspect in general, maintaining that it is completed by the presence of six qualities in a worshipper's

1. I.D., IV, 315; K.S., pp.—

2. See supra, pp. 103-106

3. I.D., I, 111-12; K.S., pp.120, 121-36.

4. I.D., I, 136-42; K.S., pp.137-40.

mind. These are single-mindedness, understanding the meaning of the verses and the praises (tasbīhāt) recited in a prayer, magnifying God, fear, hope and shame. The first is the mind being completely free from things other than the acts being done and words being uttered in prayer - so completely that it is aware of only these and its thought does not wander to any other thing; it is engrossed in the thought of God. Without this single-minded devotion, prayer is invalid (bātil) because it produces no effect on the soul; it is the life-spring of prayer. As against the jurists who maintain that the presence of devotion only at the start of prayer is enough for the validity of prayer, al-Ghazālī says that it must be present throughout the whole prayer if prayer is to have the desired effect on the soul and to become provision for the hereafter. Magnifying God is the feeling of self-abasement, and self-submission to God who is great and majestic. Fear is of His punishment on account of defects in prayer. Hope is of His reward despite defects in it. Shame is felt owing to the inability to perform the prayer as required.<sup>1</sup>

Besides thus describing the inward aspect of prayer in general, al-Ghazālī also discusses the internal aspect of every specific part of the external aspect of prayer.<sup>2</sup> He does not speak of any social significance of the Friday assembly prayer (ṣalāt al-jumʿa) and of prayer in the congregation (jamāʿa).<sup>3</sup> The latter's effect he equalizes with that of twenty-seven individual prayers. Regarding the former he says that the earlier one

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1. I.D., I, 144-45; K.S., p.141.

2. I.D., I, 142-53; K.S., pp.142-45.

3. I.D., 155-160, 166-69; K.S., pp.148-54.

comes to the mosque the nearer one becomes to God and that on Friday there is an unknown hour in which every prayer is accepted by Him. By contrast, a philosopher, Miskawayh, maintains that these two forms of prayer are prescribed in order to help men develop their innate love and fellowship so that they may not quarrel among themselves in society.<sup>1</sup> To al-Ghazālī, prayer is for the benefit of the individual soul; the effect of it on the soul removes from it the evil effect of small sins; virtuous qualities like modesty, humility, fear, hope etc., are produced in it;<sup>2</sup> as a result of concentrating the mind on remembrance of God throughout the whole prayer, it gradually becomes inclined to Him and begins to love Him. Thus if performed with due regard to both its aspects, prayer becomes a means of attaining nearness to God.<sup>3</sup>

#### Poor Rate

The second obligatory devotional act is poor rate (zakā). Al-Ghazālī discusses in detail the types of things on which rate is to be levied, different rates on different things, people to whom tax is payable and the external manners of paying the tax.<sup>4</sup> He says that a man at the lowest grade of spiritual progress pays only that much of wealth whose payment is fixed by the Sharī'a. Those at a higher level give away more than that; they store up wealth not for enjoyment but for meeting their need (darūra) and helping the poor and doing good deeds when opportunity arises. At the highest grade are the most devout who give away all their

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1. Tahdhīb, pp.140-41; cf. Avicenna, Shifā': Metaphysics, II, 445<sup>4</sup>, 445.

2. I.D., I, 134.

3. I.D., I, 142.

4. I.D., I, 188-91; K.S., pp.156-61.

wealth.<sup>1</sup> Paying poor rate is a devotional act related to wealth ('ibādat māliya) and in order to be able to fulfil its inward stipulations, one has to know its deeper meaning: it is prescribed so that by means of it man may purify his soul from the evil quality of miserliness and beautify it with the quality of gratitude to God.<sup>2</sup>

One paying poor rate has to observe several tasks so that his act may not be fruitless. These are, paying the tax earlier than the time when it becomes obligatory. If one fixes a time for payment, it should be the first or the twelfth month of the lunar year. To pay secretly is better for this is safe from hypocrisy, but if paying openly is likely to encourage others to pay and there is complete safety from hypocrisy, it is better to pay in others' presence. The alms-giver must abstain from mann and adhā. The latter is frowning at the sight of a beggar, annoyance with him and talking harshly to him, hating him and looking at him with the eye of contempt. The former is a soul's quality which makes the alms-giver feel that by helping the poor he does a great benefit to him, and therefore, has him in his control; because of this feeling he talks about his alms, expects from the beggar thanks, service, respect, salutation and so on. The alms-giver should consider his alms something very small even though it is his entire wealth or a great part of it. Alms should be given from the best and the lawful wealth and with pleasure; how to attain to this stage has already been explained. Preference should be given to poor relatives, for by giving to

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1. I.D., I, 192; K.S., pp.162-63. 2. I.D., I, 192, 193-94.

them one gets the rewards of alms-giving and fulfilling the right of relatives whereas by giving to those poor men who are not relatives one gets the reward of alms-giving only.<sup>1</sup>

### Fasting

Fasting (sawm) is the third obligatory act of devotion. The fixed time for it is the lunar month of Ramaḍān. Fasting on other great days of the year is an act of supererogation.<sup>2</sup> There are three grades of fasting according to al-Ghazālī. The lower grade is to refrain from food, drink and gratification of sex, from dawn till sunset. This is the common men's fasting (sawm al-ʿawām). A higher grade consists in keeping the members of the body from what God disapproves. This is the fasting of the elect (khawāṣṣ) i.e. the pious (ṣāliḥūn). They keep their eyes from looking at things disapproved, the tongue from quarrelling, lying, slandering and uttering what is unnecessary, and the ears from listening to anything which one should not utter. The same kind of restraint they exercise over their other members and stomachs. They break their fasts (iftār) with lawful food and do not take an excessive amount, eating more than they normally eat because they are fasting by day; eating more is incompatible with the aim of fasting which is weakening the appetites and doubling the capacity for works of piety. At the highest grade of fasting the mind also fasts; i.e. it refrains from all worldly thoughts and cares and remains engrossed in God and the hereafter. This is the fasting of the prophets, the most devout and those drawn near to God, and this fasting is broken if the mind is

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1. I.D., I, 193-96, 198; K.S., pp.163-67.

2. I.D., I, 212-14; K.S., pp.178-79; B.H., pp.128-29.



attentive to any worldly matter which is not an aid to the hereafter. Then, mere abstention from food, drink and sexual gratification is, as it were, the body of fasting without the spirit. The reality of fasting lies in weakening the appetites. When this is achieved man gains a divine attribute, namely, freedom from hunger and thirst (samadiyya). This is also an angelic quality and by its acquisition man is also brought near to God. With the weakening of the appetites the tendency to evil becomes weak and the capacity for good deeds increases and this is why fasting is called the foundation of devotional practices and the key to good works. When the soul is purified it becomes capable of remembering God and reflecting upon Him; remembering Him is impossible when appetites predominate in the soul; even if it were possible, it would create no effect on it.<sup>1</sup>

### Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) is a devotional act obligatory once in the lifetime of a normal adult Muslim capable of it, i.e. he has bodily health and money enough to sustain himself on the journey and the family at home during his absence, and the way to Mecca is safe. The time for it is from the beginning of the tenth lunar month of every year up to the ninth day of the twelfth month. There are five obligatory acts on which the validity of pilgrimage depends. These are the state of ritual consecration in and around Mecca (ihrām), circumambulation of the Ka'ba (ṭawāf), the ceremony of running seven times between Ṣafā' and Marwa (sa'ī), halting (wāqūf) at 'Arafa and shaving (ḥalq).

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1. I.D., I, 210-12, 214, 207, 208-10; K.S., pp.174-77;  
B.H., pp.129-30.

Al-Ghazālī mentions six other requirements without which pilgrimage is incomplete though not invalid,<sup>1</sup> and also many supererogatory acts to be performed from the beginning of pilgrimage to its end together with the manner (adab) of their performance.<sup>2</sup> All these acts constitute the external aspect of pilgrimage.

In order to perform the inward aspect one needs to know the deeper meaning of pilgrimage. According to al-Ghazālī, pilgrimage in Islam occupies the place of monasticism (ruhbanīyya) in previous religions in the sense that a pilgrim leaves home, family and all other things so that he may serve God and remember Him exclusively. Acts such as offering sacrifice, throwing stones and running etc. whose reasons are not clear to the intellect and with which man's nature is not intimate are enjoined only because perfect obedience (kamāl al-ʿubūdiyya) is achieved by doing such acts, for one who does them is motivated exclusively by a desire to carry out God's order. By this, perfect obedience to Him and complete disobedience to passions are achieved.<sup>3</sup> The journey to Mecca resembles the journey to the hereafter through death; all the acts of the former have their parallels in the latter which one should remember when performing the acts of pilgrimage. Thus when a pilgrim is trying to acquire that provision for his journey to Mecca which will not quickly perish, he should realise that the lasting provision for the journey to the hereafter is devotional acts free from hypocrisy. In this way the inward aspect of every external act of pilgrimage together with its deeper meaning has been discussed by al-Ghazālī, for

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1. I.D., I, 220-21; K.S., pp.180-82.

2. I.D., I, 221-32; K.S., pp.183-92.

3. I.D., I, 239-40; K.S., pp.

he believes that pilgrimage must be performed in both of its aspects if it is to be a preparation for the next life.<sup>1</sup> He does not speak of pilgrimage as a means of enhancing the mutual love and fellowship of the Muslims which is the view of the philosopher Miskawayh.<sup>2</sup> Regarding the circumambulation of the Ka'ba al-Ghazālī says that it is not merely of the body but of the mind as well; the mind should feel that it is circumambulating the divine presence inasmuch as the Ka'ba is the representation, in the world of perception, of the divine presence imperceptible by the senses. This is the act of the soul in circumambulation, and if all the acts of the soul are performed together with all the acts of the body pilgrimage becomes complete and its doer is included among those loved by God.<sup>3</sup>

#### Supererogatory Devotional Acts.

##### Qur'ān-reading

Although the purpose of the revelation of the Qur'ān is not recitation but the guidance of mankind on the right path, its recitation is a supererogatory act of devotion whose influence on the soul is great.<sup>4</sup> Since the Qur'ān is God's speech, anyone who reads it necessarily remembers Him, and as a result of this remembrance the love of God is generated in his soul.<sup>5</sup> This remembrance is achieved even though one does not understand the meaning of the Qur'ān. As a result of perseverance in recitation observing all its rules one acquires knowledge of God, of

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1. I.D., I, 239-44; K.S., pp.194-96.

2. Tahdhīb, p.141; cf. Avicenna, Shifā': Metaphysics, II, 444.

3. I.D., I, 244.

4. I.D., I, 249.

5. K.S., p.210.

His attributes and His works and also such virtuous qualities as fear, hope, reverence, humility, submission and so on.<sup>1</sup> Thus 'faith' is strengthened, the soul becomes pure and the rust on it disappears.<sup>2</sup> The external rules of Qur'ān-reading are described in the Ihyā' as ten and in the Kīmiyā' as six.<sup>3</sup> The internal actions have been dealt with more elaborately. Some of the latter are, realizing the greatness of the Qur'ān as the speech of God, reading it with single-mindedness, reflecting (tadabbur) on the meaning of every verse being recited, creating in the soul different conditions according to the different meanings of verses recited. Thus while reading the verses on threats and punishments the mind should be overtaken by fear; while reading the verses concerning mercy the mind should be filled with joy; when verses on God's attributes are read, it should be submissive and humble. In this way every verse has a meaning, and a condition corresponding to it should be produced in the soul. While reading the verses on the praise of those with whom God is pleased, a man should not think himself to be among them. Three grades of recitation are mentioned by al-Ghazālī and men are urged to gradually rise to the highest of them. At the lowest level a reciter supposes that he is standing before God and reciting it to Him Who is looking at him, and in his own mind he is a beggar entreating and supplicating. At a higher grade he supposes that God is conversing with him, and he is mentally abased and magnifies God. On ascending to the highest grade he supposes that he is hearing the Qur'ān from God Himself and he sees Him and His

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1. I.D., I, 256, 246, 254, 245.      2. I.D., I, 257, 245.

3. I.D., I, 247-57; K.S., pp.198-200.

attributes in its verses; so absorbed is he in seeing Him in the verses that he is not even aware of his recitation. This is the recitation of those brought near to God while the first two grades are appropriate to the less virtuous.<sup>1</sup>

### Praise

Praise (dhikr) of God, the second supererogatory devotional act, is regarded by al-Ghazālī as the best and most useful of all other acts of worship provided it is performed continuously, or most of the time with a single-minded devotion; if it is continual but with absent-mindedness or if it is performed with attention only rarely, it is of little benefit to the soul.<sup>2</sup> Four forms of praise have been mentioned by al-Ghazālī. They are, asserting God's oneness (tahlīl), glorifying Him (tasbīh), thanking Him (tahmīd), and praising Him by seeking His forgiveness (istighfār). Of these the first is the best. Al-Ghazālī speaks of four grades of praise: To praise Him absent-mindedly with the tongue alone is the lowest grade of praise; this cannot produce any effect on the soul. At a higher grade attention is kept with effort and difficulty; if this effort is not made attention is lost. At a still higher grade the mind remains so much absorbed in praise that it cannot easily be deflected. The highest grade of praise is that in which what is praised (madhkūr) i.e. God takes possession of the soul so completely that the mind is not even aware of the act of praise. A man at this grade becomes so much engrossed in God that he forgets all other things including himself - a state called oblivion (fanā') and nothingness (nistī) in sūfī literature. This praise is a manifestation

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1. I.D., I, 252-59; K.S., pp. 200-203. 2. I.D., I, 214; K.S., p. 204



that is necessitated by the circular relation between body and soul - and not one which produces love of Him and hence there is no harm if one fails to reach this stage. What is needed for producing this love is the second and the third grades of praise, for after continuous practice for a long time with effort and difficulty the mind becomes easily engrossed in praise so much so that it can hardly be separated from it. Consequently the love of what is praised, i.e. God, becomes deep-seated in his soul.<sup>1</sup>

### Invocation

Invocation (du'ā') to God, the last supererogatory act of devotion, is called in Tradition the marrow of the acts of worship because, al-Ghazālī says, what is required to be present in a worshipper's mind is self-abasement and helplessness and God's greatness and might, and both of these are present in any true invocation.<sup>2</sup> One may invoke in one's own way, but it is better to use those invocations which are transmitted by tradition (du'ā' mātūrā). A number of them have been mentioned by al-Ghazālī so that men may read them in the morning and evening and after every ritual prayer.<sup>3</sup> He mentions several other invocations which should be used in misfortunes and at the start of various works.<sup>4</sup> He describes ten ways (ādāb) of invocation with especial emphasis on those related to its inward aspect.<sup>5</sup> If man invokes God observing these ways virtuous qualities like submission and humility to God are produced in his soul. This brightens the soul. As a result of remembering God in invocations the soul gradually learns to love Him.<sup>6</sup>

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1. I.D., I, 271-72; K.S., pp. 205-10. 2. I.D., I, 296; K.S., p. 210.

3. I.D., I, 283-87.

4. I.D., I, 292-98; K.S., pp. 212-14

5. I.D., I, 274-78; K.S., pp. 210-11. 6. K.S., p. 210; I.D., I, 298.

## CHAPTER VII

### ON DUTIES

#### General Principles

It has already been mentioned that the action of the outward self which, like that of the inward, serves as a means of realizing the moral ideal, is divided by al-Ghazālī into that which is directed towards God and that which is directed towards one's fellow beings. In the former category are the devotional acts prescribed by the Shari'ah, and a brief description of how al-Ghazālī combined them with sūfism is given in the last chapter. The latter is the fulfilment of all the rights (ḥuqūq) that others have on an individual. Rights imply society. A man, in al-Ghazālī's view, is usually required to lead a family life and a life in community; it is only in special cases that celibacy and withdrawal from society for a limited period become necessary. In a life of co-operation with other human beings, he has justifiable claim on legal or moral grounds to have or obtain something or to act in a certain way; such a claim is what al-Ghazālī means by the phrase (ḥaqq al-ʿabd) which may be rendered as a man's right or due.<sup>1</sup> Rights are many in number. Whether the legal or moral grounds on which rights are justifiable are common good or individual good is a question that may be omitted here. If an individual has a right, a claim, in a community, some other individual or individuals must have the obligation to fulfil that claim; this obligation (farīda) is called duty. A duty, then, may be

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1. Lane, Lexicon, I, 608.

defined as the obligation of <sup>an</sup> individual to satisfy a justifiable claim made upon him by the community or by some other individual member or members of that community; a child, for instance, has a right to education; so it is the duty of his parents, or of the state generally, to provide him with that education. Right and duty are thus related each to other. Since rights are many, duties are also many.

The duties which an individual must fulfil if he is to realize the moral ideal are the duties towards his partner in marriage, his children and his other relatives, his guests and visitors, his friends and associates, his servants and slaves, his partners in business transactions, his brethren in society and the ruler of his country. Since al-Ghazālī is writing for people in the Islamic world, the duties towards brethren in society he calls the duties towards the Muslim brethren. The obligations towards one of these groups of people constitute one set of duties and although a set differs from another in details, the general nature of all the sets are the same. Each group of duties comprises both positive and negative duties; a negative duty is a duty of abstaining from something e.g. encroaching on the property of one's neighbours.

In each set of duties a distinction is made by al-Ghazālī between the duties of higher grade and those of lower grade - a distinction which is in accord with his two-fold classification of virtuous people. In a few cases e.g. obligations towards transactors in business, the two classes of duties have been described separately, and in others they are combined. The duties of the lower grade are not only what are required (wājib) of man accord-

ing to Islamic jurisprudence but something more.<sup>1</sup> Without their fulfilment no one can be entitled to salvation. The duties which are more than these form the higher grade and they are demanded by the deeper meaning of the Shari'ah and the spiritual insight of the sūfis. They are, in short, the various forms of beneficence (ihsān) to one's fellow-men. These, like the supererogatory devotional acts described in the last chapter, are necessary for the attainment of proximity to God and are appropriate to the mystics. The distinction between the two grades can be made clearer by an example: the buyer who pays poor sellers the exact prices of their commodities does a duty of the lower grade, but the buyer who gives them more is doing a duty of the higher grade. The latter action is, of course, not a necessity but it adds to the moral goodness of its agent. Because it is not required of man it may seem to be wrong to call it a duty, but it is named as such by al-Ghazālī on the ground that those who rise to the greatest height of moral excellence consider it necessary because they have a deeper insight into the meaning of duty and they occupy a rank in which wider duties are required.

Besides dealing with a man's specific duties towards his fellow human beings, al-Ghazālī also speaks of a general principle (ad-dabit al-kullī) of his behaviour to them.<sup>2</sup> This principle he states as follows: "In all your dealings with people, treat them as you would be pleased to be treated by them, because the faith of a worshipper is not complete until he loves for other people what he loves for himself".<sup>3</sup> Passages like this are to be found

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1. I.D., IV, 59.

2. I.D., II, 68.

3. A.W., p. 75.

in most of his ethical works<sup>1</sup> and the rule of behaviour set forth in them he supports by Qur'ānic verses and prophetic Traditions. This principle was also upheld by the sūfī al-Makkī and by the philosopher Miskawayh.<sup>2</sup>

There are places<sup>3</sup> where al-Ghazālī expresses this principle more precisely in the light of his division of virtuous people into two categories. He says that an individual should have an attitude of beneficence (ih̄sān) to others, should show them respect and should try to fill their hearts with gladness. All the duties of the higher grade described above embody this form of behaviour. One who is capable of doing these is in the rank of those brought near to God. One who is unable to do them must at least refrain from harming others; harm (ḍarar) is not limited to damage to life and property; it even includes such an act as looking at someone in a hurtful manner. Not to harm anyone is justice (ʿadl) and straightness (istiqāma) and this is required of everyone for without it salvation is impossible to attain.<sup>4</sup> Those who cause harm to others are irreligious and immoral. The following is a passage in which these three ways of dealing with others are briefly expressed by al-Ghazālī:

"In respect of other men, too, a man stands in one of three classes: (a) in regard to them he may take the place of just and generous angels, namely, by exerting himself for their ends through compassion and the desire to fill their hearts with gladness; or (b) with regard to other men he may occupy the position of animals and inanimate objects, namely, when they receive neither benefit nor harm from him; or (c) with regard to them he may occupy the position of scorpions, snakes and harmful beasts of prey, from which men expect no

1. I.D., II, 68; B.H., p.145; N.M., p.59.

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3. I.D., II, 72.

4. I.D., II, 68, 71, 72; N.M., p. 59.



good, while fearing the evil they may cause. If you can not reach the sphere of the angels, at least try not to fall from the level of animals and inanimate things to the ranks of scorpions, snakes or beast of prey. If your soul is content to come down from the highest heights, at least do not let it be content to hurtle into the lowest depths. Perhaps you will be saved by the middle way where you have neither more nor less than what suffices."<sup>1</sup>

To abstain from harming others i.e. to deal with them justly is only possible after one has observed justice within oneself.<sup>2</sup> The sun of justice, writes al-Ghazālī, rises first in a man's soul; then it spreads to the members of his household and to his intimates; then its rays reach others; to expect to find rays without the sun is to expect the impossible. Justice within oneself consists in restraining the faculties of desire and anger so that they may readily obey the dictates of the intellect and the Sharī'ah. If they are controlled to this extent, harm or injustice can hardly be done to others. For this reason al-Ghazālī, like Miskawayh,<sup>3</sup> believes that the observance of justice within oneself is the precondition of one's observance of justice to others.

Then, the general principles of dealing with others are only two in number. One is of rendering beneficence to them and the other is not doing any harm to anyone which is identified with justice in social behaviour. These two rules of conduct are prescribed by al-Ghazālī in accordance with his two categories of moral men, and these are at work in his formulation of specific duties towards one's fellow human beings. The following pages contain a brief description of different sets of duties as he conceives them, with, however, no mention of the proofs that he

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1. pp.110-11.

2. K.S., p.420; N.M., p.24.

3. Tahdhib, pp.132-33.

gave for them from the Qur'ān, Tradition and the sayings of the mystics and godly men.

### One's duties towards his

#### Friends

Friendship, al-Ghazālī says, may be established between two individuals as a result of their union in school, in travel, in the <sup>k</sup>ing's court and of their living in the same place or village. Besides this, a man may deliberately make friends with another because of his handsome appearance, pleasant talk or of any worldly benefit from him. But to love someone in order to obtain from him anything that may be an aid to the hereafter or for the sole reason that he loves God and obeys Him is love for the sake of God (ḥubb li-Allāh wa fī Allāh) in its two forms - a love by which man attains nearness to God. Of these two forms the latter is higher in grade because its source is extreme love (fart al-mahabba) or passionate love ('ishq) of God possessed by the mystic.<sup>1</sup> In choosing a friend one should be very careful. The qualities that need to be present in a prospective friend are intelligence, piety and good character. Because all these are very rarely combined in one person, a man in selecting his friend should look to his motive: If his motive is simply fellowship he should befriend a man of good character; if it is worldly benefit he should seek a generous man; if his motive is other-worldly benefit one who possesses piety and knowledge is the right man to be his friend. A godly man should befriend the one who can give him or receive from him any religious assistance. Not to make friends is not a crime at all, but it is a crime if

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1. I.D., II, 142-46; K.S., pp.309-10.

one does not keep friendship after establishing it.<sup>1</sup>

The duties of friendship discussed by al-Ghazālī are those of friendship for the sake of God<sup>2</sup> mentioned above. These duties are ten in number. The first is to help the friend with wealth. At the highest grade of friendship a man should regard his friend's right to his wealth as greater than his own; at a lower grade he should regard the rights of both as equal; at the lowest grade he should help the friend with his surplus wealth before he seeks help from him; if he does not help him until he asks for help his friendship is not real for this proves that he is unsympathetic towards him. The second duty is to help the friend not only in his need for money but in all other needs before he seeks help and to stand by him in all his important affairs with a generous disposition and a cheerful countenance. The third obligation to be fulfilled by the tongue is to speak good of the friend and to conceal his faults. If, in his presence, anyone speaks ill of his friend, he should protest imagining that the friend is hearing, from behind the wall, whether or not he is protesting. Dispute with the friend should be avoided carefully and his secrets must not be disclosed even after separation because this is a sign of meanness. The Fourth duty is to express to the friend love for him, for this would make the friend more confident of his affection for him. Love for the friend can be expressed by asking him about all his affairs and showing that he is a partner in his weal and woe, by calling him with that nickname which he likes most, by saluting him first, by expressing deep gratitude for the benefit he received from him. The fifth obligation is to guide

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1. I.D., II, 150-52; K.S., pp.314-15.      2. I.D., II, 150, 142.

the friend in religious matters of which he may be ignorant, but if he should neglect this advice, he should try to create the fear of God in his mind.<sup>1</sup>

The sixth duty is to forgive the friend's faults and shortcomings. If his fault amounts to sin he should be gently requested to shun it; if he persists in sin he is to be admonished secretly and not in anyone's presence; if admonition proves ineffective, severing relations with him secures freedom from his sin, but to continue them is more humane. If his fault is not any sin but only neglect to fulfil duty towards him he must be forgiven. Any excuse that he may make for his faults even though it is obviously false should be accepted. The seventh duty is, while praying to God, to remember the friend during his lifetime and also after his death and, likewise, his wife and children. As he should pray to God for himself so he should pray for the friend. The eighth obligation is to fulfil (wafā') friendship. This has many meanings, such as (a) to take care of friend's wife, children and friends after his death, (b) to be kind to all those who are the objects of his friend's care and love be they his friends, children, students or attendants, (c) to preserve politeness to the friend and not to be arrogant if he himself acquires high social status or rises to a high official rank, (d) to preserve his love all the time and not to cut the relationship for any reason, and (e) to look upon the friend's enemies as his own enemies. The ninth duty is not to be artificial to the friend. Slight artificiality is a mark of imperfection in love for befriending one for God's sake means

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1. I.D., II, 161-69; K.S., pp. 324-25, cf. Miskawayh, Tahdhīb, pp. 160, 161, 162-63, 165-66.

union (ighānighi) with him and in union there can be no artificiality. Lastly, a man should consider himself neither superior nor equal but inferior to his friend. Without expecting from him any worldly thing he should pay a great regard to him and give him the utmost care.

#### Muslim Brethren

While al-Makki mentioned ten duties of Islamic brotherhood which he derived from the oft-narrated Traditions on it,<sup>1</sup> al-Ghazālī enumerates them in the Ihyā' as twenty seven and in the Kimiya' as twenty one. The duties of both higher and lower grades he describes together but they can easily be distinguished by their natures. A few of these duties can only be described here very briefly. A Muslim, he says, must not wish evil of other Muslims nor must he harm them whether by word or deed. He should, if he can, do them good without making any distinction between the pious and the wicked. He should be polite to them and should tolerate them if they are rude to him. If he gets angry with one of them, he must not break off relations with him for more than three days; after this time when he meets him he should be the first to extend greetings to him. He should not believe anyone speaking ill of others but keep away from them.<sup>2</sup>

A Muslim should respect others according to their status. A man of high position deserves more respect than the one who is lowly; God has given different men different positions and a believer in Him needs to recognise this by behaving to them in accordance with their status. If he is indebted to someone he should pay him more honour. His dealings with others should be

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1. Qūt, II, 288-90.

2. I.D., II, 171-72; K.S., pp. 325-27.



according to their intelligence for if he talks to the ignorant and unlettered the way he does to the learned, he will pain them and will himself be pained. He should respect the old and be affectionate to children; respect for the former is completed by not speaking in their presence without their permission. He should be kind-hearted, quiet, easy of access, cheerful and friendly to others. Once the Prophet advised Mu'adh to fear God, speak the truth, fulfil promises, repay debts without denying them and lower the arms in humility. Since breaking promises is the quality of a hypocrite he needs to keep from it.

A Muslim's great duty is to reconcile, if possible, enmity among others. So necessary a task is this that lying becomes lawful if it is needed in accomplishing it. A Muslim should keep concealed the faults of other Muslims as he should hide those of his own; if he is aware that a Muslim has done some abominable deeds he should not tell others of it, otherwise his Muslim brother will be put to shame. There is, of course, no harm in disclosing the faults of those who do evil secretly and then inform others of it themselves (mujāhirūn). Investigation into others' secrets and listening to those who do not like that others should listen to them are contrary to etiquette and acts forbidden in the Qur'ān. A Muslim must not do anything that may lead others to sin. An example of such acts is to rebuke those who worship other than God, because this elicits from them rebuking Him. Another example is to scold others' parents, for this impels them to scold his parents. He should intercede for another believer with someone to whom interest is linked; intercession for preventing bloodshed, causing benefit or driving away anything

disapproved is charity of the tongue.<sup>1</sup>

If someone is harming another in the presence of a Muslim he should oppose the oppressor if he is able to do so. When he happens to be in a wicked man's company, he should not be harsh to him as long as he is with him. It is also a believer's duty to please others and to meet their needs; this is an act of great moral value. He should associate with the poor and help the orphans; the rich commit sin more often and so association with them makes one sinful, but the poor, because they are often in distress, remember God more and so mixing with them makes one godly. To help the orphans is the duty of everyone having means to do so; the effect on the soul of putting hands on an orphan's head out of pity is equivalent to the effect of the good deeds of an equal number of the hairs covered by the hand.<sup>2</sup>

When a believer meets another believer he should salute him before starting to talk to him and shake hands with him. Believers cannot be good believers unless they love each other and greeting all those whom he meets is a means of enhancing love. When one enters a house one should salute its inmates. Saluting with bowed head is bad; there is no harm if women salute men, and vice versa. Shaking hands as a result of which mutual love increases is the perfection of greeting.<sup>3</sup>

A Muslim should visit another Muslim in sickness. A visitor's good manner lies in sitting beside the sick man only for a few minutes, not asking him many questions, expressing deep

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1. I.D., II, 176-78; K.S., pp.328-30.

2. I.D., II, 184; K.S., pp.331-32.

3. I.D., II, 173, 179-83; K.S., pp.332-34.

sympathy for him and praying to God for his speedy recovery; the sick man's good manners, on the other hand, lie in not complaining to his visitors of his suffering, in praising God, in praying to Him for recovery and for patience in suffering, and in trusting, while taking medicine, not in it but in its Creator. Visiting a sick man once is necessary and more than once is supererogatory and this should be after every three days. A Muslim should attend the funeral of another Muslim. The manner of escorting a bier consists in modesty, silence, observation of the dead, reflection on death and preparation for it and walking before the bier being close to it. A Muslim should visit the graves of those who have died. The manner of this visit consists in bowing, expressing sorrow, talking very little, not smiling at all, praying to God for forgiveness, reflecting on death and moving his heart by thinking about their utter helplessness.<sup>1</sup>

#### Neighbours

In order to show how great is the need of fulfilling the duties towards neighbours al-Ghazālī quotes the Tradition in which it is said that the Prophet used to emphasize it so much that his companions feared that he might appoint the neighbour of a man as heir (warith). Neighbourhood covers an area of forty houses in all directions. A man may have three categories of neighbours, namely, polytheists, Muslims and Muslim relatives. A polytheist neighbour has a claim on him; a Muslim neighbour two; and a neighbour who is a Muslim and at the same his relative has three claims.<sup>2</sup>

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1. I.D., II, 185-88; K.S., pp.334-36.

2. I.D., II, 188-89; K.S., p.336.

A man's duties towards his neighbours al-Ghazālī discusses by bringing them under four broad duties. The first is to refrain from doing harm to them however small it may be. Even throwing stone at a neighbour's dog is a form of harming him. To build a house, without the neighbours' consent, so high that it will prevent fresh air reaching them is another way of harming them. The steam from his kitchen should not trouble them. If his children cause them any harm he should punish them in their presence. He should not harshly treat the neighbours if they put things on his wall, or let water go down beside his courtyard, nor should he narrow their paths to their houses. If any neighbour does any of these or other harms he should endure these. Endurance of harm from a neighbour is the second broad duty as keeping from harming him constitutes the first duty.<sup>1</sup>

The third duty is to pay respect to neighbours. Various ways of respecting them have been mentioned by al-Ghazālī. Some of them are to salute them first, not to talk to them too much, not to ask them about the minute details of their affairs, to share in their weal and woe, not to rebuke them, not to peer from the roof of one's house at their secret affairs ('awarāt), not to look at what is carried into their houses, to keep a watch over their houses when they are out, not to listen to the one backbiting them, not to look upon their wives and female servants with lust, to speak gently to their children, to offer them a slice of the fruit he might buy for himself or to eat it secretly if he is unwilling to offer it to them, and to give them from the ewe offered up in sacrifice.<sup>2</sup>

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1. I.D., II, 188-91; K.S., p.337.

2. K.S., p.337.

The fourth duty is to be kindly to neighbours. There are many ways of helping a poor neighbour. Important among them is to lend him money when he needs it. A poor neighbour may be helped by so small a thing as a gift of curry soup. Help is not limited to material things; it includes spiritual help, too.<sup>1</sup> All these duties are in addition to those towards Muslim brethren.<sup>2</sup>

#### Relatives

Al-Ghazālī says that one who strengthens blood-kinship (silat ar-rahim) is loved by God, and one who severs it is hated by Him. The reward of many virtuous deeds is delayed in this life or postponed until the next, but discharging the duties towards relatives (aqārib) is something whose reward is given by Him very soon. Its recompense is an increase in the lifetime of its agent, in his sustenance and in the general welfare of his family even though he is a profligate (fājir). To be best in doing the duties of blood-kinship is a quality of the one who is best in all things.<sup>3</sup> These include all the duties of Islamic brotherhood described in a previous section. There are a few more duties which have been emphasized by al-Ghazālī. These are visiting relatives from time to time and inviting them to his house and entertaining them in the proper manner to be described shortly. All these increase mutual love and strengthen blood-kinship. A non-Muslim relative should be treated in the same way as a Muslim relative for in this regard blood-kinship remains the same all the time. In giving, preference should be given to

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1. I.D., II, 189-90.

2. K.S., p.337.

3. I.D., II, 91; K.S., pp.337-38.



relatives, for by giving to the poor one gets the reward of giving alms only, whereas by giving to poor relatives one gets the reward of both giving alms and fulfilling the right of relatives. If a relative severs relationship, he should join it; if he deprives him of something he should give it back to him, and if he does him injustice he should forgive him.<sup>1</sup> It is better for relatives not to live as neighbours for quarrel on rights which often takes place among neighbours sometimes goes to the extent of severing blood-kinship.<sup>2</sup>

### Parents and Children

Since parents are the nearest of all a man's relatives, he has some special duties to fulfil towards them. Beneficence to them in their lifetime is not enough for him; he has to perform certain duties after their death too. Beneficence to the mother should be the double of beneficence to the father, for she is more affectionate to the children and undergoes more hardship for them.<sup>3</sup> Duties towards parents are all the duties of Islamic brotherhood and two more. One of these two duties is to obey them in doubtful matters (shubhāt) though not in a purely unlawful affair (ḥarām maḥḍ). Thus if a man's parents become displeased when he refuses to eat doubtful food with them, he should not refuse because to avoid what is doubtful is piety (wara') whereas to please them is a decree of God (ḥatm). The other duty is not to go abroad, without their consent, for any permissible or supererogatory act. Thus a man should not go on pilgrimage to Mecca in his early life; rather he should stay at

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1. I.D., II, 192; K.S., p.338.

2. I.D., II, 192.

3. I.D., II, 192-93; K.S., p.338.

home and serve them to the best of his ability for this is his best deed after his belief in God's unity. For the same reason he should not leave, without their permission, for a distant city in order to acquire supererogatory knowledge. Duties towards the eldest brother are nearly the same as those towards the father.<sup>1</sup> Of the duties to be fulfilled after the parents' death, one is to pray to God for their forgiveness; a pious man's prayer for his parents can scarcely be refused. Another is to fulfil the promise which they might have made to someone but could not get time or opportunity to fulfil. A third duty is to respect their friends and to preserve relationship with all their relatives.<sup>2</sup>

As to a man's duties towards his children, one of them is to celebrate, on the seventh day of a child's birth, the ceremony of naming ('aqīqa) and give him a beautiful name. When he is six years old, parents should begin to teach him about good character and religious practices; this has been discussed in the chapter on character. They should not curse their children nor wish evil to them. If they do not show them affection they cannot expect it from them. They should give them what they want and appease them when they get angry. It is necessary for parents to assist their children in obeying them; the way of this assistance is their not doing any evil for which children may disobey them; an evil of this kind is failing to observe equality in offering them gifts and in affection for them. When a boy is sixteen his father should arrange his marriage and then say to him - I have given you a good upbringing, taught you and arranged a good

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1. I.D., II, 194-97; K.S., p.340. 2. I.D., II, 193; K.S., p.338.

3. I.D., II, 193-94; K.S., p.339.

marriage for you. I am not responsible to God if you do evil.

### Partner in marriage

In fulfilling the claims of a wife what is needed for a man is to observe moderation and to show good character.<sup>1</sup> He is not only to refrain from harming her but to endure any harm she might cause him and to tolerate her when she gets angry with him. He should not oppose her if she likes to satisfy her passions in a lawful manner; he should gladden her by means of making jokes and playing games with her, and in doing these he needs to bring himself down to the level of her intelligence. Of course, these must not be done to the extent that her awe of him will depart; it is the moderation that is needed in all these. If he finds her involved in any evil, he needs to treat harshly. Woman's nature is such that if slight leniency is shown to her she makes misuse of it; if too much of it is granted she goes out of bounds; but if she is treated harshly where harshness is needed, she remains within the limit. Woman is weak in intellect and it is evil that predominates in her; the remedy for the predominance of evil is harshness and rule (siyāsa) and the remedy for weakness is mercy and kindness; the mingling of harshness with kindness balances her two defects. A husband should first observe his wife in order to determine the degree of these defects in her and then resort to the necessary degree of harshness and kindness. He should not be too jealous (ghayūr) of her. This jealousy should be in its proper place i.e. where there is good reason to doubt her character; in the absence of such a reason he should not imagine evil of her nor rebuke her nor spy on her secret

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1. I.D., II, 38.

affairs for all these are strictly forbidden in the Qur<sup>ān</sup>. Too much jealousy leads her to evil.<sup>1</sup>

In the matter of the maintenance (naḥaqa) of his wife he should be neither miserly nor extravagant but moderate. Maintenance should be given from lawfully acquired wealth and he must not resort to unlawful means for her sake. One who is moderate buys meat for the family every fourth day and sweets once a week. It is a duty of the husband to advise her about the necessary things of religion if she does not know them. If he himself is ignorant of them he should seek decisions on them from a muftī. It is very necessary for him to look to her spiritual well-being. If a dispute occurs between husband and wife and it is from both sides or from his side only, two mediators - one from his relatives and the other from her kinsmen - should be called to reconcile them. If the dispute is from the wife only, it is the husband who will make her obey him; first he should treat her with compassion but, if this is ineffective, he will be harsh to her. The same process is to be adopted in urging her to perform the devotional acts if she is lax in them.<sup>2</sup>

As for the wife's duties, she must obey her husband whatever be his command except when obedience to him involves disobedience to God. To emphasize this obedience al-Ghazālī quotes the Prophet's words to the effect that if he were to ask one to prostrate himself before another, he would have asked a wife to do so before her husband. Two things in addition are strictly required of a wife. One of them is chastity and the veil; she

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1. I.D., II, 41-43; K.S., pp.248-50.

2. I.D., II, 43-46; K.S., pp.250-52.

will seclude herself in the house; if she needs to go out, she can do so with his permission and wearing an old veil. The other thing is not to claim from him what she does not need or what he is unable to provide; she should caution him against earning livelihood by unlawful means; she should be pleased even if he is incapable of providing her with sufficient livelihood. It is incumbent upon her to keep him away from sin and to encourage him to good.<sup>1</sup>

She should take good care of his wealth and should not misuse it or neglect it. It is unlawful for her to give away anything without his consent. Of course, consent is not needed in giving away perishable food. To manage the household affairs is not a thing disgraceful on her part. When he is out she is to feel somewhat distressed and be engaged in the acts of devotion, but when he is in she should be cheerful and try to please him by her words and deeds. If he is ugly to look at she must not hate him.<sup>2</sup> Some of these and a few other duties of a wife have briefly been mentioned in the following passage of Nasiha:

"A wife will become dear to her husband and gain his affection firstly by honouring him; secondly by obeying him when they are alone together and (further) bearing in mind his advantage and disadvantage, adorning herself (for him), keeping herself concealed from (other) men and secluding herself in the house; by coming to him tidy and pleasantly perfumed, having meals ready (for him) at the (proper) times and cheerfully preparing whatever he desires, by not making impossible demands, not nagging, keeping her nakedness covered at her bed-time, and keeping her husband's secrets during his absence and in his presence."<sup>3</sup>

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1. I.D., II, 52-53; N.M., pp.113, 160, 167; K.S., p.255.

2. I.D., 54-55; N.M., pp.162, 165, 66; K.S., p.255.

3. N.M., p.170.



## Visitors and Guests

Because al-Ghazālī regards it a man's duty to visit (ziyāra) his friends, relatives and Muslim brethren and also to invite them to be his guests (ḍayf) from time to time, he discusses what is one's duty towards visitors and guests. According to him, one's duty may, in general, be said to consist in honouring them and gladdening them. This is completed by entertainment with food, by pleasant talk and by cheerfulness at the time of reception, entertainment and saying good-bye.<sup>1</sup> All these he discusses briefly in his two major works on ethics. About the entertainment of visitors his view is that this should be done by the food already present in the house; no trouble should be taken (takalluf) for them. Taking trouble here means preparing for them better food than the usual or placing before them all the food present in the house; these are forbidden because these lead to separation between friends and cause hardship to the family of the host. If he has no food to offer he need not borrow it from others for this too is included in taking trouble for them. If only that amount of food is present which is needed for the family he need not offer it to the visitors. If he is willing to entertain them he should place food before them without asking them whether or not they wish to take it for asking them is an insult to them. If he is not willing to entertain he should not speak of it at all. Entertainment of a visitor who is fasting is with perfume, fragrant oil and pleasant talk.<sup>2</sup>

The manner of entertaining the invited guests is different

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1. I.D., II, 17 lines 3 ff, 15 line 6, 14 lines 2ff, 11-12, 8;  
K.S., pp.236, 237.

2. I.D., II, 10, 11, 13 line 18 f.; K.S., pp.231-33.

from that of the uninvited visitors mentioned above. It should be done by taking all possible trouble and even by getting into debt if necessary.<sup>1</sup> Nothing immoral or irreligious should be allowed in sitting room and dining room otherwise the guests may be pained and some of them may even leave the house. Seats for the female guests should be set on one side before. Food should be offered without delay for this is a mark of respect for guests. Fruit should be served first for this is in accord with medical science. Meat should be an item for by it respect for the guests is achieved. Sweets should constitute the last item. Meat and sweets are two things that make food palatable (ta yiyibāt). Entertainment with such food gladdens the guests and brings forth their sincere gratitude to God. The quantity of food to be placed before them should be enough and neither more nor less for the last two are, respectively, affectation and against good manner<sup>S</sup>. The host should eat with them; he should not finish eating before them otherwise they might feel ashamed; rather he is to start to eat when they are about to finish and to complete after them all; this is a mark of politeness. When they are leaving he should accompany them to the door of the house in order to see them off; this is a way of honouring them. Cheerfulness, pleasant talk and expression of brotherly feeling are needed from him at this time.<sup>2</sup>

#### Servants and slaves

Observance of justice and equality, in al-Ghazālī's view, is needed very much in dealing with servants and slaves. This was one of the things which the Prophet strongly emphasized when

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1. K.S., pp.133-34. 2. I.D., II, 13, 14, 15-16, 18; K.S., pp.236-37.

he was just departing from the world. One <sup>who</sup> is unfair to them will be deprived of happiness. A philosopher, Miskawayh, too, felt the need of justice towards servants, but, unlike al-Ghazālī, he emphasized it for the purpose of preserving harmony and concord in society which is not achieved if the relationship between servants and their masters becomes bad owing to injustice.<sup>1</sup> Moreover he did not explain the requirements of this. Al-Ghazālī, by contrast, elaborates them by quoting the relevant Traditions. He says that a master should allow his servants to share his food and clothing; he should allow them to eat from the same food as he eats and to wear the same quality of cloth as he wears; if one of them is serving him food, he should ask him to sit with him and eat or should at least put some of it on his hand and ask him to eat it. To charge servants with work beyond their capacity is inhuman. He must not look at them with the eye of contempt; rather he should regard them as equal to him for they are his brethren and their souls are like his. Since they are human beings like him, it must not ever happen that he is on horseback and they are running behind him.<sup>2</sup>

Servants' faults should be forgiven. To emphasize the need for clemency to them the Prophet once bade one of his companions to forgive his slave seventy times a day. By nature man gets angry if servants disobey him or cause him harm, but he needs to control himself by the appropriate means described elsewhere. Just as servants should not disobey their masters, so, too, the latter should not neglect any advice given to them by the former for their material or spiritual betterment. To advise his master

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1. Tahdhīb, p.144. 2. I.D., II, 195-97; K.S., pp.340-41.

is a laudable act on the part of a servant. One who does so in addition to fulfilling his duties towards God and towards him is to be counted among those who will first enter the shade of happiness.<sup>1</sup>

### The ruler

Discussion of al-Ghazālī's conception of the ruler's duties towards the ruled is relevant to a work on politics, but dealing with what he said about the latter's obligation towards the former is relevant to the present study inasmuch as it is directly linked with the problem of an individual's character. His view on this point is to be found in two short passages of his work Nasīḥa where he maintains that if a king rules justly, does good to his people, refrains from oppressing them and shows mercy to the victims of injustice, the subjects are under obligation to obey him, honour him, love him and never to rebel against him; those who fail to fulfil this obligation are ungrateful since they receive his favour but do not offer him anything in return. To dispute with a just and virtuous king is improper and to hate him is wrong. To support this view al-Ghazālī quotes the Qur'ānic verse, "Obey God and obey the Prophet and those among you who hold authority" which means obey God and the prophet and princes (amīrān).<sup>2</sup> Such a view was also held by Aristotle and Miskawayh; the former expressed it in connection with his theory of justice<sup>3</sup> and the latter while dealing with justice<sup>4</sup> and love.<sup>5</sup>

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1. I.D., II, 196-97; K.S., pp.340-41.

2. N.M., pp. 45-46, 104-05.

3. Tahdhīb, p.116.

4. Ibid., pp.120-21.

5. Ibid., pp.146-47.

## Transactions in business

A business transaction based upon injustice is defined by al-Ghazālī as the one which involves something that causes harm (darar). This harm may be general (<sup>m</sup>ʿāmī) i.e. to society, or especial (khāss) i.e. to the person or persons with whom one is transacting. After fulfilling all the stipulations of sound transactions laid down by the Muslim jurists, a transaction may involve any of these two kinds of harm and be based upon injustice. Therefore, an individual's duty is to refrain, in addition to fulfilling those stipulations, from behaving in such a way as may cause harm to anyone.<sup>1</sup> Al-Ghazālī does not say what harm or injustice here precisely means.<sup>2</sup> He only describes two kinds of behaviour in transactions which involve general harm and four involving especial harm and says that knowledge of these will enable one to realise the nature of harm and various other forms of behaviour causing both kinds of harm.<sup>3</sup>

Al-Ghazālī first discusses the behaviour in transactions which involve general harm. One is monopolizing (ihṭikār) food-stuffs. Hoarding it with a view to selling it when the price will rise is harmful to society. By foodstuffs <sup>he</sup> ~~is~~ means those things on which people live and not those which are used to aid food such as medicine, saffron and so on; there is a controversy as to whether the things which are used to aid food and which meet hunger for a time but on which one cannot live, e.g. fruit, honey, are included in food-stuffs; hoarding of these is not free from

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1. I.D., II, 66; K.S., p.272.      3. I.D., II, 68 line 16.

2. Miskawayh regarded justice in transactions as a kind of distributive justice and described the way in which it can be determined; see his Tahdhīb, p.114.



being undesirable. Hoarding foodstuffs is not forbidden in all circumstances but only when they are not abundantly available; when they are available and people's need for them is not desperate, hoarding them in the hope of an increase in price and not of breaking out of a famine is not harmful and so is not injustice, but is undesirable because the hoarder waits for the beginning of harm i.e. rise in price, and waiting for the rise in price is like waiting for the harm itself. In the time of famine, of course, hoarding of honey, butter and similar things too is forbidden. The other behaviour in transaction whose harm is general is passing spurious money. One to whom this money is paid passes it on to another, who, in turn, passes it to still another and so on. The harm of this behaviour thus becomes common to the people in society.<sup>1</sup>

One behaviour in transactions whose harm is confined to the person or persons carrying it out is to praise a commodity for a quality not really present in it. Besides being false this act confuses the buyer and leads him to pay more than its true value. Another is to hide the defect, if any, of the commodity. This may be done in various ways. To show the buyer the better side of cloth or the better part of a pair of shoes and to display cloth in poor light are all included. Still another is to conceal anything concerning the quantity or measurement of the commodity. Measurement should be the same in both buying and selling of a thing. Real justice ('adl haqiqi) in measurement cannot be achieved for he who explores his right in it thoroughly surpasses it. Therefore safety in selling lies in giving a little

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1. I.D., II, 67-68; K.S., pp.772-74.

more than is due and, in buying, in taking rather less. Dishonest sellers of foodstuffs mix with them stones etc. and butchers mix with meat such bones as are not usually sold with it; these and similar kinds of behaviour are included in the concealment of measurement. The fourth is to hide anything about the price of a commodity. Sometimes a trader of a town hastens to meet those approaching the town with their goods, and keeping concealed the price of similar things in town, he buys their goods at a low price. There are many other forms of concealing the price.<sup>1</sup>

While refraining from these and all other similar kinds of behaviour in commercial transactions is a lower grade of duty appropriate primarily to the lower class of virtuous people, a higher duty is to do, in addition, beneficence in a transaction i;e; to behave in such a way that the other person or persons with whom one is dealing is benefited. Such dealing may assume six forms. The first is not to profit in the transaction more than usual. There is harm neither in profiting (for trade is carried on for profit) ~~nor in profit itself (for business is carried out for this purpose)~~, nor in taking more than the usual profit provided it involves no deception, but not to profit more than usual is an act of beneficence. The second is deliberately to pay the poor seller of a commodity more than its actual price; this is an act better than charity. Paying a rich merchant more is, of course, wasting money and never an act of beneficence. The third act of beneficence is in receiving the price of things sold to the poor and in collecting the money lent to them. Beneficence may here be made in three ways, namely, disparaging a part of the

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1. I.D., II, 69-70, 60-82; K.S., pp.278-79.

amount of money to be paid by them, accepting from them defective money and giving them more time for payment. The fourth form of beneficence is in paying debts. Beneficence in it is made by good payment which means the borrower's going to the lender to repay the debt himself, hastening to pay it as soon as he gets the chance of it even though the fixed time for payment has not yet come, giving the lender things better than those borrowed. The fifth is rescinding the sale if the buyer seeks this because he feels that he is harmed in it. The last form of beneficence is selling food-stuffs to the poor on credit with the determination of not to demand the price from them unless they become well-off and of exempting them from the price if they die without paying it.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to doing the acts of beneficence the most devout remain concerned with the hereafter in all their business transactions. Such a man accomplishes several tasks of which the first is that every day he renews his intention in his <sup>trade</sup> ~~trade~~ that it is to sustain himself and his family with his own wealth and to aid with it his religious activities; he resolves to desire for others what he desires for himself, to maintain justice and beneficence in the manner already mentioned and to order others to do good and prohibit them from the evil which he will see in the market. Secondly, he selects for himself one of those occupations which are <sup>beneficial to and needed by others and abstains from those occupations which are</sup> ~~forbidden or undesirable or permissible~~ but assist men in the pursuit of worldly enjoyment. Thirdly, the business of this world does not hinder him from the other-worldly business; he spends the first part of the day in the mosque and the rest in

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1. I.D., II, 72-75; K.S., pp.257-82.

the market, or the first and the last parts in the mosque and the middle part in the market; in the market also he remembers God and remains engaged in His praise. Fourthly, he is not greedy of trade - so greedy that he goes to the market first and comes back last and voyages for business purposes; these two things he considers bad because these are marks of strong greed for sustenance. To avoid falsehood, deceit, oaths, artifice, perfidy, and other vices usually committed in the market he leaves it as soon as he has made sufficient money for the day and utilizes his time in the work of spiritual betterment. Fifthly, he avoids not only the unlawful but also the doubtful; since he is at the greatest height of spirituality he decides these not by the jurists' decisions (fatāwā) but by his own conscience. He does not transact business with persons charged with injustice, perfidy, stealing, usury and oppression and with their associates and helpers, for transacting with them is to render them a great help, and it is wrong to help the oppressors. Lastly, he keeps watch over every minute detail of his dealings with people in the market, for he knows that he will be asked about his dealings on the Resurrection Day.<sup>1</sup>

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1. I.D., II, 75-79; K.S., pp.283-87.

## CONCLUSION.

In the preceding pages efforts are made to present the ethical theory which al-Ghazālī set forth in the works he composed during the mystical period of his life. The study of this theory may be brought to a close by summarizing these pages very briefly. In the first chapter are determined the nature and scope of his ethics. The central problem of his ethics has been found to lie in happiness in the hereafter. This otherworldly concern has determined many basic features of his moral teachings. His ethics is religious and mystical as opposed to secular ethics dealing exclusively with this-worldly well-being. The scope of his ethics is very wide. Ethics, in his view, is separate from politics and jurisprudence but needs support from them. His ethics is by and large individualistic in nature for it teaches personal interest in morality. The purpose of ethical study, he believes, is action and not merely gaining knowledge of moral matters; the aim of action is to improve the condition of the soul which may lead to happiness in the life to come. Al-Ghazālī's ethics is teleological since in it acts are evaluated by their consequences - an act is good if it produces such effect on the soul as would promote happiness directly or indirectly. He recognizes the place of revelation, reason and mystical intuition in moral life. These three are the sources of moral obligation. A distinctive feature of his ethics is its composite character. In the systematization and development



of the ethical ideas derived from different sources, including his own mind and experience, into a composite whole, the mystical elements remain dominant so that his ethics may be called primarily mystical in nature.

In the second chapter are discussed certain fundamental conceptions of al-Ghazālī concerning human nature which form the background of his ethical ideas proper and also his conception of man's moral end and the means of its realization. Al-Ghazālī believes that the real man is the soul which is of the same origin as the angels. The origin and the nature of the soul are divine. Although created imperfect the soul is given the capacity of acquiring perfection and it is for acquiring this that the soul descends to the world of body. In acquiring provision for its eternal life the soul used the body as a mere instrument; since the body is a very necessary instrument it must not be despised. Thus in ethics al-Ghazālī makes use of the dualistic and the instrumentalist theory of mind and body. He also employs in it the interaction theory which he develops into the circular theory of mind and body. This theory is very important in his ethics. Al-Ghazālī believes that in man's constitution there are four basic elements from which emerge all his acts and qualities. Reason is the essence of the soul; it is the angelic nature in man. In the light of these views he holds that man occupies a place between the angels and the lower animals and that the more he acquires the angelic attributes the more moral he becomes; the moral ideal in its highest form is to resemble the angels and thus to draw near to God. Al-Ghazālī believes in the four

faculties of the soul which he makes the basis of his theory of virtue. That the faculties are four and not three and the reason for introducing a fourth faculty are all very clear in his ethics. The introduction of the fourth faculty is important not only for its bearing upon the theory of virtue but also because by it he excludes the conduct of children and the insane from the domain of ethics.

Man's goal, according to al-Ghazālī, is to attain happiness in the hereafter. Otherworldly happiness and misery are both physical and spiritual. The spiritual states are superior and more intense than the physical. Happiness in the life to come has two major grades. The lower grade is appropriate to the lower class of the virtuous referred to as the pious, the God-fearers, etc. The higher grade is reserved for the higher class of the virtuous consisting of prophets, saints, mystics, etc. The cause of happiness in al-Ghazālī's view, is not God's pleasure in the virtuous, nor is misery caused by his anger towards the vicious. God is neither pleased with those who obey Him nor angry with those who disobey Him. It is the condition of the soul which will bring happiness or misery as necessarily as poison causes death and magnet attracts iron. For this reason al-Ghazālī emphasizes the improvement of the soul so much so that his ethics may be regarded as an ethics for the soul; no action is prescribed to please God. Consistently with this view he maintains that the nearest means to happiness are 'goods' of the soul. There are sixteen means to happiness which fall into four groups. The 'goods' of the soul are reducible to knowledge and good qualities or character-traits.

One form of knowledge is 'faith' with which ethics is concerned. Good qualities result from good actions. The primary means to happiness, therefore, are action and knowledge including 'faith'. It is with action and 'faith' or 'belief' that his whole ethics is concerned. The other three groups of means are essential for or useful to the primary means. By introducing 'the goods of divine grace' al-Ghazālī makes happiness partially a divine gift. 'Belief' with which ethics is concerned is that of 'the people of the <sup>truth</sup> faith and the Sunna'. Corresponding to the grades in happiness there are grades in 'belief' and knowledge. In the case of action also there are two broad grades. A great difference exists between these grades and also between the motives of their performance. Action and knowledge including 'faith' are man's provision for his life to come and also his perfection. Both of their two grades constitute provision, but perfection refers to the higher grade. Perfection is not required of every individual; only the most virtuous can acquire it. The majority of people only attain to the lower grade of knowledge and action which will ensure the lower grade of happiness. Perfection is identified with nearness to God and resemblance to the angels. As a result of knowledge, faith and action, the love of God is produced in the soul. This love is the moral ideal to be realized in this life. The more one realizes this ideal the greater will be one's happiness in the hereafter. Grades in knowledge and action cause grades in love. The higher grade of love which will bring higher happiness in the life to come is very intense love and one who acquires it occasionally experiences the state

of 'annihilation'. Thus the stages of perfection, of nearness to God, of full resemblance to the angels, of extreme love and of annihilation refer to the highest stage of moral development. This stage is the goal of the mystic path. The goal of the lower class of the virtuous is below this stage. Then, knowledge, faith and action improve the condition of the soul; they produce in it love of God which will bring happiness. The last five chapters of the present study deal with the improvement of the soul by the acquisition of good character-traits or virtues, by the removal of vices and by doing good deeds.

In the third chapter the problem of good character is discussed. Character is defined as a relatively permanent disposition or state of the soul from which actions proceed easily; it is not action or knowledge or power. If the state of the soul is such that good actions proceed from it it is called good character. Character becomes absolutely good if the four basic virtues are achieved in their perfect degree. The theory of sub-virtue is only a logical outcome of that of the basic virtue. Virtue is the mean between two extremes and vice is deviation from the mean. Thus good character depends upon the observance of the mean. Indeed, not only here but also in other parts of al-Ghazālī's ethics the doctrine of the mean plays an important role. The mean is to be determined by both reason and the Shari'ah. Therefore, the view that in al-Ghazālī's ethics the basic virtues are determined by unaided human reason is absolutely wrong. The methods of achieving good character are three - divine gift, repetition of or habit-formation in the virtuous acts and association with the virtuous.

The latter two methods involve change of character by effort and struggle, but with this effort the element of 'the goods of grace' is always mingled. The creation of a virtuous state of the soul by the method of repetition is linked with the circular relationships between the soul and the body. The criterion of the complete acquisition of a character-trait or virtue is experience of pleasure or ease in doing the <sup>relevant</sup> deeds. In children's training in good character three principles are recommended - good companionships, direct instruction in doing good and avoiding evil and avoidance of all that may lead them to an easy and luxurious life.

As regards vices, ten of them are regarded as root vices from which others stem. Purification of the soul cannot be complete until all these ten are removed. The reason for this lies in the theory of the interconnection of vices. The outward expressions of vices are evil acts prohibited by the Shari'a. These acts are to be avoided because they affect the soul of their agent in a bad way and because they harm others. The removal of vices is emphasized more than the avoidance of evil acts since acts proceed from vices. The root vices form an ascending scale beginning with greed in food and ending with pride which is the greatest of all vices. In getting rid of vices the need for a true, skilled and competent spiritual director is strongly urged, for it is through his guidance that purification may be easy and successful. The principles to be followed in curing the soul's diseases are two - knowledge and opposite action. For the complete removal of a vice, both principles should be combined. Most of the root vices are



deviations from the mean between two extremes and so the aim of self-training in the removal of a vice is to achieve the mean. The technique of achieving it and the method of knowing whether or not it has been achieved are both clearly described. In the case of purification also the interaction theory of mind and body together with its circular aspect plays an important role. The concept of the two classes of the virtuous is also applied here, for what is not a vice for the lower class of the virtuous is often considered as a vice for the higher class.

With the acquisition of the mystical virtues the beautification of the soul is completed. Indeed, beautification refers precisely only to their acquisition. In their perfect form these virtues can only be acquired by the mystics. In their imperfect form they are attainable by the pious. While the acquisition of the root virtues with their sub-divisions is meant for the general purpose of achieving good character, the mystical virtues are only for the specific purpose of attaining nearness to God. The methods of acquiring the latter and the former virtues are the same. The criterion of the completion of self-training in mystical virtues is also the same. Mystical virtues have a tripartite nature - they are composed of three elements. Precisely, however, a mystical virtue refers to the element of disposition (hāl) only, so that the tripartite nature of a mystical virtue or character-trait is not inconsistent with the definition of a character-trait given in connection with the root virtues, as a relatively permanent disposition of the soul. Besides this fixed and established quality of the soul hāl has another meaning in

al-Ghazālī - a transitory quality of the soul. While the root virtues are defined as the mean between two extremes, only two mystical virtues are so defined. The doctrine of the mean does not play an important role here. Some mystical virtues are means to others. Those which are ends will remain in the soul eternally after man's death. The mystical virtues, like the root vices, form an ascending scale beginning with repentance and ending with love of God. All the means-virtues and all the end-virtues which are below it and indeed all the moral efforts are only preparation for it.

The devotional acts directed towards God are linked up with the mystical virtues since they are regarded as proceeding from these virtues. The obligatory devotional acts are to be performed by all, while the supererogatory acts are appropriate to the higher class of the virtuous. The perfect performance of an act which is possible for "the few" only depends upon the observance of both its external and internal aspects. Neglect of the internal aspect makes the act merely lifeless motions of the body which fail to produce any good effect on the soul. This emphasis upon the internal aspect differentiates al-Ghazālī's ethics from jurisprudence which has no concern with this aspect. But since the detailed knowledge of the external aspect can be had from jurisprudence this discipline is regarded as useful to ethics to a certain extent. Al-Ghazālī's emphasis upon the internal aspect is connected with his view of the purpose of devotional acts in moral life. Their function is to produce in the soul the love of God and the hereafter and to remove from it the love of the world. This is made possible through the

interaction theory of mind and body. Acts of devotion do not aim at keeping order among people and restraining them from fighting among themselves. Nor do they aim at pleasing God and thereby drawing forth His aid and favour. They must be performed by everyone, 'weak' or 'strong'. The mark of the completion of self-training in devotional acts is the same as elsewhere, i.e. pleasure in their performance.

In the case of man's duties towards his fellow-men also the distinction between the lower and the higher grades is made. The duties of the lower grade are more than those prescribed in jurisprudence. Since detailed knowledge of most of them can be had from this discipline it is useful to ethics. The duties of the higher grade are various forms of beneficence. The general principle of behaviour to others is 'Treat them as you would be pleased to be treated by men', or 'desire for others what you desire for yourself'. This principle is explained in the light of the concept of two classes of the virtuous as follows: The most virtuous should have an attitude of beneficence to others, show them respect and try to fill their hearts with gladness. The lower class of the virtuous should refrain from harming others even though very slightly. Not to harm anyone in any way is justice in social behaviour. Observance of this justice is only possible when justice is observed in oneself, i.e. when the faculties of desire and anger are controlled according to the dictates of reason and the Shari'a. Thus good actions directed towards one's fellow-men proceed from the root virtues. The theory of the four root virtues is not isolated from the other parts of al-Ghazali's ethics as is sometimes supposed; it

is the basis of the ethical teachings in the second parts of the Ihyā'. By connecting duties with the root virtues and the devotional acts, with the mystical virtues, al-Ghazālī links up man's outward self with the inward. This link is something central in his ethics.

As regards the order in moral training al-Ghazālī's view is that self-training should begin in devotional acts. This should be followed by training in duties, i.e. in good actions directed towards one's fellow-men. Only those who have successfully completed training in these two kinds of actions related to man's outward self should be allowed to undergo training with regard to man's inward self. Here the starting point is purification of the soul from vices. This should be followed by beautification with the mystical virtues. When all these virtues have been acquired the disciple has become a sūfī, a perfect man, and has attained nearness to God and extreme love of Him and occasionally experiences the state of annihilation. He has reached the highest stage of moral life - a stage which will bring him <sup>to</sup> highest happiness in the hereafter.

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